

THE

GARDEN OF EDEN

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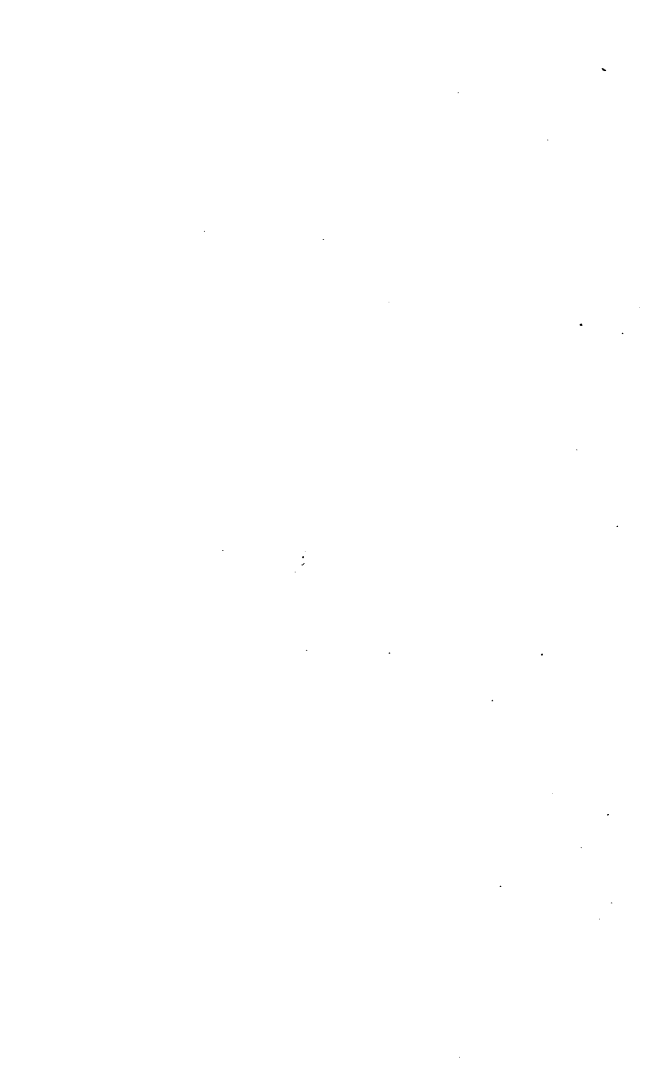
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New-Church Popular Series. [No. 9.]

THE
GARDEN OF EDEN:

GIVING

*THE SPIRITUAL INTERPRETATION AND
TRUE MEANING OF THE STORY.*

BY
REV. JOHN DOUGHTY,
AUTHOR OF "THE WORLD BEYOND."


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PREFACE.

T the present day there is not much openly avowed infidelity in Christian lands. But there are reasons for believing that there exists a vast amount of it in a latent form, and no inconsiderable portion even in the churches themselves.

And since it prevails among some of the most thoughtful and honest people, the questions, What is the cause of it? and How is it to be effectually remedied? deserve the serious consideration of every friend of mankind, and especially of every teacher of the Christian religion.

The chief cause undoubtedly is, the mistaken idea in regard to the Sacred Scripture and the method by which its true meaning is to be elicited, which has become so prevalent throughout the bounds of Christendom. This idea is, that the written Word has but *one* meaning, and that, the meaning conveyed to the natural under-

standing by the natural or sensuous interpretation of the words of Scripture.

By this false but prevalent method, the Bible is reduced to the level of a human composition, is robbed of its Divine spirit and life, and much of it made to teach what every rational mind sees to be very unreasonable—some of it unintelligible and even puerile. No wonder, therefore, that questions like the following, which Mr. Ingersoll is reported to have asked in a recent lecture, should arise in many thoughtful minds :

“Is there any intelligent man or woman now in the world, who believes in the Garden of Eden story [literally interpreted] ? ” “Does any human being now believe that God made man of dust, and a woman of a rib, and put them in a garden, and put a tree in the middle of it ? Was n’t there room outside of the garden to put his tree if He did n’t want people to eat his apples ? If I did n’t want a man to eat my fruit, I would not put him in my orchard.”

What, then, is the remedy ? We know of but one ; and that is, to teach people the real nature and purpose of Holy Scripture—to show them wherein its divinity consists, what is the law that

governs in a truly divine composition, and what the method therefore by which its true meaning is to be unfolded. All of which is so fully and clearly revealed in the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg, that every one who carefully and prayerfully examines these writings, is sure to see it. And the Christian ministers who refuse or neglect to do so, are left without excuse,—and will continue, however unintentionally and unconsciously, to foster the growing skepticism of our times.

The purpose of this little volume is, to lift the reader's mind above the sensuous plane of thought, and to show him, by a method of interpretation applicable alike to all other parts of Scripture, the spiritual and true meaning of that old Garden of Eden story.

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THE GARDEN OF EDEN.

I.

THE GARDEN.

And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed.—Gen. ii. 8.

THE figures of the Bible put together by the rigid rules of arithmetic, inform us that the world was created about six thousand years ago; but science with its unanswerable logic fixes the time of its creation some hundreds of thousands of years earlier. The letter of Genesis declares that it was spoken into existence by the fiat of an almighty God, and completed in seven days; but science asserts that countless ages elapsed from the beginning of the earth to the period when it became fit for human life. The Bible seems to teach that we are all, of whatever color or conformation, descendants of the one man, Adam; but science casts a doubt upon this apparent teaching, which almost amounts to certainty. Hence religion and science are in conflict; and the skeptical mind which is born to

doubt, and has educated itself to deny what is not scientifically proved, condemns religion and sides with science, and floats off, full often honestly enough, from its own standpoint, into the unknown seas of unbelief and the dark ocean of infidelity.

And common sense comes in to have its say. The Bible seems to hinge the whole fate of the human race, for countless ages, on the eating of the fruit of a single tree by one human pair. It seems to place our heavenly Father in the position of having set a snare for the first created man and woman, which they were not endued with strength to resist. It presents to us a talking serpent with powers of apt persuasion. It affirms that the man and his wife were so blind that they could not even behold their own nakedness until the eating of the forbidden fruit brought it to their sight. It makes sorrow and toil and pain and death for all mankind, even into the unknown ages, dependent on a single act of two untutored individuals, of which their myriad children were all innocent.

Thus the narrative of the Garden of Eden becomes so confused and incredible, that common sense is either forced to give way to a childlike faith in what is written, or to throw to the winds all confidence in Bible history. But can true science and true religion ever part company? Can

common sense and revelation be really at variance? Would the God who made all science, have given a religion which denies its plainest propositions and ignores its most unquestioned truths? Or would He who endowed his creatures with whatever common sense they may possess, have revealed a written Word which could not stand the test of common sense? Skeptics and believers alike will answer, No!

The trouble usually arises from a mistake on the part of both scientists and theologians. Because he cannot find the name of God as the Maker written plainly on the face of the stars, the scientist doubts the existence of an intelligent Creator. And because he finds the conclusions of scientific research to be at variance with some literal statements of the Bible, the theologian denies the plainest propositions and facts of science. The scientist wants to find material proofs for spiritual things, or sensuous evidence for that which is above the realm of sense; and the theologian would have spiritual evidence for that which is merely natural, or proof from revelation of that which is plainly written on the rocks or disclosed by the movements of the stars before his eyes.

Both these classes have a lesson to learn. Astronomy and geology and cosmogony are taught in the volume of nature, not in the written Word. Immortality and heaven and God are

revealed in the Bible, and not in the rocks and stars. The scientist need not doubt the Scripture, because its natural science is at variance with earthly knowledge; the theologian need not fear the progress of science, lest it should overturn revelation. The Bible is purely spiritual. Its spiritual teachings are in harmony with all true science and philosophy; but in itself, its object, and the genuine intent of all its statements, it is purely spiritual. Man can gain natural truth by the use of his eyes and his natural understanding. But he can obtain spiritual truth only by revelation and that inner consciousness of the verity of spiritual things, which intuitively grasps its teachings when they come before the mind in the form of revelation.

If, then, the Bible in its intent and meaning is purely spiritual, why does it profess to give us a scientific account of the creation and a historic record of the earth's earliest events? The Bible does not anywhere profess to teach science, philosophy, or history as natural things. Its object was well expressed by Paul, who commended Timothy for his knowledge of the holy Scriptures, because they were able to make him wise unto salvation, and added: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, or reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect,

thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. iii. 16, 17). The Bible professes to teach righteousness and salvation, and all truths about heaven and God that lead to these. If there is more than this it is incidental.

True, the Bible is replete with the history, tradition and laws of the Jews. But then how often it is asserted that these are types of spiritual things. It recounts, for example, the story of the building of the temple; but our Lord says that the temple was a type of his humanity. It tells how the wife of Lot looked back to burning Sodom, and became a pillar of salt; but He says that this is a type of the fate of those who, having put their hand to the plough in religious life, look back to the world and self. It repeats the tale of Jonah; but Jonah being three days and nights in the belly of the fish, was a type, says Christ, of his own entombment and resurrection. It sets forth how Israel was fed in the wilderness by manna; but the story of the manna, according to Jesus, shows forth the lesson how the Lord will, at all times, feed the spiritual Israel, his Church, with goodness and with grace. The serpent was lifted up in the wilderness; but this was a type of the elevation and glorification of the Son of Man.

These things our Lord plainly says and positively sets forth; and we thence learn that all

Biblical history is typical, symbolical, representative or correspondential of the Lord, of his ways with man, of his work for man's salvation, and of human regeneration.

Paul also tells us much concerning these representations, and gives many explanations of their typical nature. We may only refer to the fact here, as leading up to and pointing out the truth, that whereinsoever the Scripture does not directly and in plain language teach spiritual truth, its histories and narrations are given as types and symbols of spiritual things, as parables or allegories of spiritual life. This is wherein the holiness of Scripture consists. It may use for this purpose the history, the traditions, or the natural science of the people to whom it was first given. Whether these be strictly true or not, is a question in no wise pertinent to the issue. When Paul asserts, for instance, that the life of Abraham and his family as set forth in the Biblical narrative, is an allegory (Gal. iv. 22-31), the question is not whether there is any historical error in the account, but whether it is perfect as an allegory of spiritual life. And when the same apostle declares that the tabernacle to the most minute details of its construction, and the Levitical law with all its sacrifices, offerings, and curious commands, were shadows of heavenly things (Heb. vii., viii., ix., x.), it is not the ques-

tion whether anything was left out of the Mosaic narrative, or whether there were inconsistencies therein which modern ingenuity fails to harmonize, but whether they are perfectly expressed as types and shadows of good things to come in a spiritual way, for men of a later and more spiritual age.

The New Church takes its stand upon this ground: that the Scripture of God is given for purely spiritual purposes; that it is written throughout as a parable of spiritual things and an allegorical code of spiritual instruction, in types, sacred figures, or correspondences; that it is mainly true in its historical details, but that, as it was not given to teach history or science, scientific inaccuracy, or any other objection which may be raised on the purely natural plane, no more mars its perfection as the inspired Word of God, than would it invalidate the spiritual authority of the parable of the Prodigal Son, could it be incontestably proven that no such individual ever lived, behaved riotously, fed swine, repented, or returned.

In this view it is proposed to take up the history of the Garden of Eden. This narrative has been given as a spiritual allegory. Its construction, its peculiarities of diction, and the difficulties which surround the assumption that it is the record of actual facts set down concerning a

historical man and woman, point to it as a specimen of divine parable, beautiful in its simplicity, perfect in its symmetry, harmonious in its statements. It is of no consequence how inconsistent or inaccurate it may be as a historical record; as a parable it is perfect, and that is enough. The Divine Mind here as in other parts of the Word, seeks to teach not natural but spiritual history; not the outward actions of races, but the inward workings of hearts. It treats not of changes of locality, but of alterations of state; not of the loss of a natural abode, but of the forfeiture of a spiritual home. The outer husk of the narrative is temporal and carnal; its inward life is moral and spiritual.

The first thought that suggests itself in the consideration of this topic, is in reference to the etymology of the word "Eden." It is a Hebrew expression signifying delight or happiness. And when we consider that the term garden is often applied in the Scripture to man's state of spiritual intelligence, or to that frame of mind in which he readily comprehends and accepts spiritual things, that this peculiar state of mind is alluded to as a garden, likened to a garden, called a garden, we have no trouble in arriving at the truth that the Garden of Eden was man's spiritually intelligent state of love and happiness in the early age of the world. For was it not said in reference to

the Jews, spiritually unfertile and dry as their religious state was, "Ye shall be as an oak whose leaf fadeth, and as a garden that hath no water" (Isa. i. 8)?—that is, as an intelligent mind not fertilized by any conception of spiritual truth? And when the restoration of the Church was foretold, and its promised fertile and fruitful condition set forth in glowing figures, was it not said by the Lord, "Thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not" (Isa. lviii. 11)?

Eden is also mentioned in other parts of Scripture. It is generally used, however, in reference to a spiritual condition, and not as a place. Thus the Lord, through Ezekiel, rebukes the prince of Tyre for his arrogance, and for his assumption of the honors of divine worship. He holds up before him the perfectness of his walk with God until iniquity lay hold upon him; and how much lower would be his fall, because, having been once perfect, he has now, in his pride, proclaimed himself a god. In reference to his first state the Lord says, "Thou hast been in Eden, the garden of God" (Ez. xxviii. 13). Now the prince of Tyre had never been in any literal garden called Eden. But he had followed the Lord; he had loved and worshiped Him; he had feasted on spiritual intelligence; he had been, spiritually speaking, in Eden, the garden of God. Eden was his religious

state; it was his state of love for God; it was, if you please, the kingdom of God in which he once had dwelt—not locally, but as to mind and heart.

This same figure is used by the Lord in speaking of Assyria, as again given in the prophet Ezekiel. He extols the Assyrian for what he had been, as a people, and condemns him for what he then was. Depicting, in the language of correspondence, his former high spiritual estate, He says: "Behold the Assyrian was a cedar in Lebanon with fair branches and of high stature. Not any tree in the garden of God was like unto him in beauty. I have made him fair by the multitude of his branches; so that all the trees of Eden that were in the garden of God envied him" (Ez. xxxi. 3, 8, 9). The whole description, and much more too voluminous to quote, is purely symbolic. The cedar tree is the Assyrian man or mind, with its peculiarly rational tone as it was in its highest and best religious state. The trees of Eden are those men or minds who were in the love of the Lord; and the garden of God in which they were planted, is that state of spiritual intelligence in which are all who love the Lord, his ways, his truths, and his life. And therefore it is that Isaiah, in prophesying concerning the future spiritual condition of the Church, declares that the Lord "will make

her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving and the voice of melody" (li. 3). How beautiful a description of the wonderful change that shall transform the religious wilderness of Judaism into the Eden of Christianity—the desert of religious ignorance into the garden of spiritual intelligence!

He who attains this state of superabounding love, is in Eden; he who can see spiritual truth as clearly as he understands natural truth, is in the Lord's garden. Eden, as a sacred symbol, is love, with all the blessings that follow in its train; a garden, as a sacred symbol, is spiritual intelligence, with all the joys that follow its possession. And our early ancestors—no matter where they lived, nor by the side of what rivers, nor in what meridian, clime or zone—were in the Garden of Eden; not because they were here or there, but because they were in a state of love and innocence and joy and bliss that no tongue can express; because they were in a state of consciousness of the Lord's presence, of comprehension of the things of divine wisdom, and of conception of all that pertains to eternal life and its joys, of which none but dwellers in that garden can form the least idea. Perhaps they were simple in what we call worldly ways; illiterate in what

we term letters; without the luxuries which we have learned to love; and innocent of the very knowledge of evil; good in all the Lord calls good, and wise in the wisdom of holy life, beyond all that this world, as it now is, can imagine.

But was not Adam a single individual? Careful consideration does not so read the Scripture. Adam is the Hebrew term for man; not man a male individual, for there is another Hebrew word for that; but man collectively as a class or race. Adam means mankind. It could not mean an individual, for in the original it is a collective noun. True, the translators of the Bible, having imbibed the old tradition of Adam as the sole progenitor of the human race, have sometimes translated it as though it were the name of an individual. But they have been compelled, in other places to give the real meaning, or spoil the sense of the text. Thus, when it is said in the first chapter of Genesis, "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness" (Gen. i. 26), the original Hebrew word is Adam. But it would not do to translate it Adam there, as the name of an individual, because the text proceeds thus: "And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea," etc. And the next verse continues in the same strain: "So God created man," literally, "God created Adam, in his own image, in the image of God created He

him; male and female created He them. And God blessed them; and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth and subdue it."

Adam, then, is a collective noun. Adam was created male and female; and there were a number of them, for the term *them* certainly means more than one. Adam was the primitive race. He was placed in Eden, not as a single man in a solitary garden, but as a race of men originally brought into the kingdom of God. His state or condition was called Eden, because he was loving and therefore happy; a garden, because he was truly intelligent and spiritually wise. Adam (that is, the human race) would be in Eden to-day, if all men loved the Lord supremely, and perceived and appreciated the heavenly intelligence with which their Maker seeks to endow them.

The history of Eden is, therefore, an account, in allegorical form, of the spiritual condition of the early inhabitants of earth. Each word in the narrative is a symbol, and a perfect one. Inconsistencies in the letter disappear when their spiritual meaning is discerned.

Briefly let us glance at a few of the attributes of this wonderful garden. It was planted eastward in Eden. In sacred symbolism the east is where the Lord is. Spiritually, we are looking

eastward when we look to Him. The garden was, therefore, said to be planted eastward in Eden, because the religion of those people all centered in the Lord. Their love, their innocence, their joy and gladness were recognized as from the Lord, were rejoiced in as the Lord's, were manifested as the Lord's life flowing through them. The garden, therefore—their spiritual wisdom and intelligence—was planted in Eden, their love and spiritual joy, eastward, in the full consciousness of their possessing both from the Lord and in his presence. "And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food."

Our Lord very often, when on earth, likened the ground to the mind. It is another sacred symbol. When He likened himself to a sower sowing the seeds of Gospel truth, the shallow soil was the shallow mind, the stony ground was the callous mind impervious to spiritual ideas, the good ground was the fruitful mind. The ground here out of which the trees grew, was the ground of the mind. The trees are the mind's perceptions. Sometimes this word is used for the man himself or the mind itself; but it really means the mind's religious perceptions. "Every tree that bringeth forth good fruit" of which our Lord spake, means not only every man or every mind, but specifically every

perception of true life which the mind has, that goes forth into good life, or bears spiritual fruit. So all perceptions of the true, which sprang forth in the ground of the minds of those people, which could be pleasant to the sight (mental sight is the understanding; pleasant to the sight, is agreeable to the understanding) or good for food—good, that is, for spiritual nourishment—were given by the Lord to a people so loving and so true.

The river that went out of Eden to water the garden, is a curious expression. How, literally, could the river go out of Eden to water the garden, if, literally, Eden was the garden? Naturally, it could not; spiritually, it could. The river is the symbol of wisdom considered as flowing into the mind from the fountain of wisdom, God. It would be pleasant to trace this beautiful symbol through its many phases in the Word. Suffice it here to allude to the river of water of life, which in the Revelation is described as proceeding out of the throne of God and the Lamb. The river of Eden and the river of the New Jerusalem are one. The spirit of wisdom, its fountain-head being the Lord, proceeds from the love of spiritual things within the mind, and the delight in pursuing them. Without a love for it and a delight in its pursuit, there is no wisdom of any kind. Hence the river went forth from Eden—wisdom springing from love and its de-

light. And it went forth to water the garden, or to give life and vigor to human intelligence.

And this river is said to have parted into four heads, and to have watered four regions, Havilah, Ethiopia, Assyria and the land of the Euphrates,—not because any literal rivers went forth to water natural lands, but because the mind has four regions to be influenced by reason and to be guided by intelligence. These are the will, the understanding, the rationality and the memory. They are spiritual lands—lands of the mind and not of matter; and the names of those particular countries are so applied, because they afterwards became sacred symbols in accordance with the predominating genius of their people, and in that sense are elsewhere used in the Scriptures.

So geographers may give up their disputes in the effort to find impossible rivers watering impossible lands and flowing from an impossible Eden; for Eden is in all places where man is of heavenly mould, and its garden and trees and rivers are simply descriptive, in ancient symbolism, of the minds and hearts of a people beloved of the Lord. Even the gold of Havilah they may cease to search for, as we are told in the text that the gold of that land was good. For Havilah was the land of the will; and goodness—good thoughts, good desires and good deeds—was the golden will of those celestial people who lived in olden times.

To this era, all tradition points. From Egypt, India, Greece and Rome, the oracles of the ancient chronicles tell us in glowing syllables of the Golden Age. It was the world's young morn of happy innocence. Why is it set forth in Scripture? To teach the Church what it has been, and what it may again become. That which has been, may be. That which has once been lost, may once again be found. And the life that man has lived, may be lived by man again. We may all dwell in Eden; and the narrative of the garden of spiritual joy, stands as a hope, a promise, a spiritual prophecy of what may again be realized here on earth.

May the time speed on when Christianity shall find its Eden once more, where the sole delight shall be—with love that shall never weary and wisdom that will not die—to dress and keep, in its eternal beauty, that sacred garden of the Lord!





II.

THE TWO TREES:

And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.—Gen. ii. 9.

THE very first principle in our consideration of whatever relates to the Garden of Eden, lies in the truth that it is a state and not a place; that the entire narrative is an allegory, and not a literal history. Eden is in the heart. The garden is of the mind. The second chapter of Genesis describes not a natural occurrence which took place in a particular earthly locality, but the spiritual condition of the most ancient Church. Adam means not one individual, but all mankind. The garden was a symbol of the intelligence in which they lived; Eden, of the sphere of love and joy amid which they moved. And Adam in the Garden of Eden, is an allegory of the state of love, happiness and spiritual intelligence in which the Lord placed the early fathers of the human race. This was the lesson we drew from the text in our last discourse. This is the plain inference to be deduced from what the Scripture elsewhere affirms of its own method of interpreta-

tion; from what the Lord's Word elsewhere testifies concerning Eden and the garden that bore its name.

This method of calling certain conditions of life or states of mind by, as it were, local names, is a characteristic of all Scripture, and has been followed by the poets of all time as peculiarly beautiful and expressive. A verse in Moore's *Lalla Rookh*, illustrates this poetic peculiarity, borrowed from the age of symbolism.

“There's a bliss beyond all that the minstrel has told,
When two, that are linked in one heav'nly tie,
With heart never changing and brow never cold,
Love on through all ills and love on till they die.
One hour of a passion so sacred, is worth
Whole ages of heartless and wandering bliss;
And, oh! if there be an Elysium on earth,
It is this, it is this.”

How the force of this passage would be destroyed were we to imagine Elysium as used here, to be a particular province or town in which all young lovers dwelt. It is descriptive, on the contrary, of a state of love and bliss. But should we substitute, in place of the idea of a sentimental passion between two young hearts, that of a condition of perfect love to the Lord, with all the joy, peace and innocence with which that state is so closely bound, and close a couplet poetically descriptive thereof with the exclamation,

“And, oh ! if there be an Eden on earth,
It is this, it is this,”

we would get the precise idea of the manner in which Eden is to be understood in Scripture. This is a conception that must be thoroughly imbedded in our minds and naturalized to our thoughts, if we would read this portion of the Bible aright. So thinking and so intuitively grasping the spirit of the narrative, we are prepared to follow its details to their legitimate conclusion.

Now in this view it becomes evident that, as Eden is not a place nor the garden a locality, the two trees which play so important a part in the narrative must be something other than their literal import would indicate. If the Garden of Eden is a phrase indicative of the state of the people of the Lord's first Church on earth, these trees must, in some way, be further descriptive of that state. Their very names indicate this. A tree of life—a natural tree that would bear fruit, the eating whereof would render our existence on earth one of endless duration—is a thing that we cannot comprehend. To suppose that any natural fruit could nourish our souls to eternal life, in the higher spiritual meaning of that term, would tax our credulity still more largely. But as this garden is of the mind, to find some mental attributes of which these trees

are symbolic, or to which they correspond, were not so very difficult.

That in ancient times the tree of life was used in a figurative sense, is evident from the manner in which it was employed by Solomon. Thus he says in his Proverbs, "Happy is the man that findeth wisdom; . . . she is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her; and happy is every one that retaineth her" (iii. 13, 18). And again, "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick; but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life" (Ib. xiii. 12). The wise man, in accordance with the usage of his day derived from a higher antiquity, applied this term to anything that gave new life or vigor to understanding, heart, thought or desire. A tree of life was that, whatever it might be, from which mental or moral life refreshed or renewed itself. We have no warrant for believing that the term in olden times was ever thought of except as a symbol. Certainly all references to it in the Bible disagree with the literal idea and sustain the figurative. But this use of the term, as seen in the quotations from Solomon, was on a somewhat lower plane than that in which the Lord uses it in the books He has given in his own name. What He says, while it has a mental and moral, has also a spiritual import. The whole Word of God in its inward meanings, announces spiritual truths.

This meaning may be gathered from the book of Revelation. Here it is our Lord who commands John to write, and who dictates what he shall write; and the words convey strictly divine meanings in all their forms of expression. And He commands this to be written to the Church of Ephesus: "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God" (Rev. ii. 7). Here the tree of life clearly indicates something high and holy. He that is entitled to partake of this tree, is he that has overcome. Overcome what? Why, the flesh and the world, self and sensuality, pride and passion; who has, in fact, trodden under foot everything, of whatever nature or description, which impedes the perfect life—sin in act, in thought, in desire. He who does this, is he who lives in love of the Lord; who lives in the Lord and from the Lord; who has the Lord's life inscribed on the very nerves and tissues of his spirit. Such an one is a living embodiment of God's law and love. He knows that it is he who hath the Lord's commandments and doeth them, that loveth Him. And He has and does, and therefore loves.

We use this term *love* a great deal. What does it mean? It means that the love or affection from which a person does his daily work, not only tinges the whole character, but gives color

and quality to the entire life. As Swedenborg expresses it, "Love is the life of man." One may do a good act from a bad love. He may live an outwardly good life from inwardly bad motives. He may be gentle and kind and give freely to charitable purposes, and be honest in business, and say many prayers, because he seeks honor and praise from men. He may do many good things from the love of approbation, or from the love of advancement, or from the love of money, or from any other selfish love. Now a good act done from an unworthy love, so far as the man is concerned, is spurious. The love from which he speaks or acts, stamps the character of the word or deed, rendering it good or bad according to the quality of the love.

But when our Lord said: "If ye love me, keep my commandments;" and "he that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me," He told the whole story of love to God, and gave the expression its true definition. The Lord's commandments teach the pure and perfect life. They are instinct with honesty, sincerity, truthfulness, generosity, unselfishness, purity, spirituality. They ignore base and low motives; they exalt that which is noble and lovely. They do not debar us from all sensual gratification, but they place sense and self under the absolute control of the spiritual faculties. Love to the Lord

is love of all things good and true, because these constitute his very Self. He taught us this kind of life in a thousand precepts, and commanded us to keep them. If we love the Lord's teachings, we love Him. If we love his commandments and practice them in our daily lives, we love Him. If we love his character and example, we love Him. If we love to have his spirit in the heart as a prompting motive in all we speak and do, we love Him.

Love to the Lord is good as a sentimental emotion ; but if it is nothing more, it is comparatively worthless. In truth it is a very practical thing. It is something that lives in the life, gives tone to the character, buys and sells, works in the hands, renders the muscles vigorous, energizes the faculties, imparts truthfulness to prayer and sincerity to worship. When love to the Lord is the principle from which we live and work, then life is genuine. We live righteously because from the love of right, and do good works from the love of good. God is righteousness itself—goodness itself ; and he who loves the right and the good for their own sake, loves God—loves Him who infills the soul with their spirit. If all men had this spirit, the world would again be an Eden, and all would be living on the fruit of the tree of life. For Eden, as we have learned, is this state of love ; but the tree of life is that love as

the very life of the heart. Eden is the state of peace, innocence and joy with which the soul is suffused, and which it carries with it in all the circumstances and vicissitudes of life, in all its labors and burdens, in all its duties and amusements. But the tree of life is that love as the fountain within the heart whence spring the spirit of goodness and purity of motive which give the life this state and tone.

The tree of life! Love to God! Let us understand this fully. Is not the Lord as a sun to the spirit? Does not the Scripture tell us this distinctly? Flows He not in with an influence on mind and heart, with the spirit of understanding and the warmth of love, in a manner similar to that in which the natural sun operates upon the earth with his light and heat? Do we not speak of the light of truth and the warmth of love as real things? Yea, the Lord, as the central Sun of the world of spirit and mind, flows in with his light into the understanding and with his love into the will. Then when it is said, "The Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord will give grace and glory," we cling to the sentiment in no merely metaphorical sense; we recognize the unseen Divinity as the fountain whence pour, as real things, the grace of love into the heart and the glory of spiritual wisdom into the understanding.

If, then, love is an implantation of the Lord's own spirit within the heart—true love, I mean—we see what a glorious tree of life it is as it takes root in the ground of the spirit, grows in vigor and expands in strength, until the whole life feeds upon its fruit and nourishes itself with its invigorating juices. For “out of the ground,” it is said, made the Lord God to grow these trees; and out of the ground of man's spirit is it, that the tree of life and its opposite spring forth.

It is noteworthy that this tree of life whereof the Apostle John wrote to the Ephesian Church, and of which it is declared that he who overcometh shall eat, is said to be “in the midst of the Paradise of God.” Paradise is Eden. In the midst of Paradise, is in the center of the heart. Observe, it is not spoken of here as a matter of the past—not as a thing of six thousand years ago—but is predicated of the present and future. The Ephesians were after Christ's time. Had Eden been a locality of earliest geography, no Ephesian could ever have been there. Literally viewed, Eden has gone into oblivion forever; it is obliterated from the face of the earth; and the tree of life exists no more. But Eden, or the tree of life in its midst, was promised to an Asiatic Church. Eden is in every heart that overcometh; and he that overcometh, to-day and forever, is in Paradise, the Eden of

God. And he eats of the tree of life nutriment—or in other words, he draws his spiritual, his disinterested, heavenly life—from the love of the Lord planted in the midst of the garden of his mind. It is not from Paine or Voltaire or Ingersoll that he draws the nourishment which feeds his mind and invigorates his heart; from such sources he gathers the food of doubt or denial of religion and its God. It is not from the world and its mean morality or sensuous pleasure; not from self with its soul-seducing conclusions, and cold, hard, iron logic, that he gathers the nutriment for his spirit's life; but it is from the love of God and goodness, and the Word of God which reveals them. The purity, the sweetness, the innocence, the unselfishness of the life which the Lord commands and gives, are so grateful to his obedient heart and receptive thought and willing hand, that he will have no other fruit to appropriate to the life of his soul.

That is to say, it is not in the garden of doubt, nor in that of denial, nor in that of merely sensuous thought, that he truly lives; not in the garden of worldliness or selfishness or mere sensuous pleasure that he dwells; but it is in Eden, the Paradise of God, the garden of love, with its intelligence and joy. And he eats not, nor nourishes his soul with the fruit, of any tree that teaches or produces or strengthens a denial of the

Lord, or an unwise or unholy life ; but he sets up the love of the Lord within his heart, or rather permits the Lord to plant it there, as the source of all true life and holy joy and serene peace—of all truth, wisdom, and intelligence. It is of the fruit of this tree that he eats, and eating lives forever. Not that his material body will live for ages unending on this earthly ball ; but his soul, wherever it works, whether in this world or the world to come, will possess that divine gift which can never be taken away, and which, in the language of the Lord, is known as eternal life.

Thus ate the Eden dwellers of old, and thus had they life. Thus may we eat and live ; and all mankind may dwell again in Eden if they will. For at almost the very close of the holy Word, with well-nigh the last written utterance our Lord vouchsafes to man, He declares : “ Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life ” (Rev. xxii. 14).

So we know that the tree of life is love ; that when it is said it grows in the midst of the Paradise of God, it means in the center of the soul ; that we eat of it by appropriating it in will and thought and act ; or in other words, by obeying the Lord’s commands ; that so did they who lived in the first Church which the Lord planted on earth, and called by the name Adam ; and that

we like them, so far as we love the Lord and live in and from Him, shall dwell in Eden too.

And now, ye who honestly doubt the Bible as the Word of God, because this narrative in Genesis is inconsistent as literal history, are you not mistaken in your criticism? Is not this which I have briefly set forth, the real meaning of Eden and its tree, viewed in the light of other portions of the sacred Volume?

But there was another tree which grew in this wonderful garden, and it was called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

There is no mention of this by name in any other portion of the Scripture. But when we come to understand the nature of the tree of life, can we doubt concerning this? Whatever the one is, the other is evidently its opposite. And if we have dwelt long and critically upon the nature of the one, it is not time wasted; for we have but to turn our backs upon the tree of life and look the other way, to behold that of the knowledge of good and evil. To eat of the tree of life, was to live from the Lord and heavenly love. To eat of the forbidden tree, was to live from self-love and the self-intelligence thence derived. The tree of life grew heavenly fruit; the tree of knowledge infernal fruit. The tree of love gave clear perception of what was good and true; the tree of knowledge filled the soul with

the evil and false. The tree of life was the way to eternal life; the tree of knowledge was the path to spiritual death.

We observed in the former discourse that trees symbolize perceptions of the mind. The different kinds of trees are symbolic of the different phases of perception. The tree of life, therefore, to use a more definite phrase, was love perceived as the very life of the soul. It embodied the idea of a keen perception, on the part of the Eden dwellers, of the fact that the Lord constantly flows into them with his love, as the sun flows to earth with its warmth; that thence the tree of life sprung up in their inmost hearts as the governing principle of their existence; and that, therefore, they lived and loved, and were wise and intelligent, and thought and spoke, really from the Lord. The tree of life was then love as a conscious perception of the Lord in their own lives. Under this perception there could be but one result. Spiritual truth would be as clear to them as the sun in its shining. As it is sufficient to say that honesty is right and truthfulness to be commended, for one to see intuitively that it is so, with them any truth of a spiritual nature, such as the immortality of the soul, the existence of God, his goodness, his mercy, his eternal providence, the life of absolute trust in Him, the belief that all his ways are right—these and all other true spir-

itual enunciations would be received without a doubt or question, and perceived intuitively. This is the highest faith known. It is the only testimony which admits of no discussion. When man loves God above all things, this faith is his. It is ours so far as we are in Eden, no further. Love perceived as the wisdom of life, and perceived as implanted by the Lord for that purpose, is the tree of life. With this planted in the soul, all argument is ended. We know because we love.

Now the tree of knowledge would be the exact opposite of this. It would begin to grow vigorously just so far as we desired to be in our own self-intelligence. The pride of one's own intelligence is a terrible thing. The desire to feel that one is one's own and not the Lord's, the vanity that would say, 'This truth I reasoned out myself; the pride that would claim that the integrity I possess is my own, and that the merit of my good deeds belongs to me; the self-sufficiency that asserts one's self as the origin and center of what he is and feels and acquires, is the tree of knowledge sending its roots down deep within the spirit. It first separates its life from God's life; then it claims the merit of its goodness and understanding; then it denies God and makes self the center, circumference, and all in all of its own little world. It loses its perception of love to the Lord as the controlling element of its nature; it loses sight of

the Lord ; it departs from his spiritual wisdom of which it has lost the inward evidence ; it tries to confirm, by sensuous evidence and natural science, that which is above the realm of sense and science ; consequently it learns to deny that, the evidence of which it has lost the capacity to weigh or understand.

Now, as the tree of life was the Lord who is love, perceived as the life principle of the soul, and as a consequence, spiritual wisdom in its broadest sense intuitively perceived, the tree of knowledge was self and the consequent self-derived intelligence perceived as the all in all of life, and sensuous evidence and natural science the arbiter of spiritual things. Is it strange that the Lord should commend the one and forbid the other ? The one in his eyes was life, the other death. The one was purity, the other passion. The one was love, the other lust. The one was wisdom, the other insanity. The one was humility, the other pride. The one grasped all humanity in its loving arms, the other centered the entire universe in self. The one shot its branches ever upward to heaven, the other sent its roots down deep into hell. That was why the eating of all the trees of the garden was commended, save only this.

The reason why it is called the tree of knowledge of good and evil, is because in eating of

this tree man comes into a practical knowledge of the distinction between the two. Previously he lived the good. Evil to him was only disobedience, a mere name for an unknown quantity, a something of which he had no experimental knowledge. The good was more a life than knowledge; the evil was neither—was nothing. But tasting of evil, then both the good and the evil came into his experience as a knowledge, as things to be talked over and compared. Good was no longer a life, but a remembrance; evil was no longer an unknown quantity, but an experience.

And now, why did the Lord plant the two trees in Eden? Why not the tree of life only? Why was man placed in the way of temptation?

The whole lesson is the doctrine of human freedom, taught in allegory and applied to the most ancient Church. To put the lesson in other words, the tree of life was obedience to the law of love, the tree of knowledge was disobedience to its divine behests. To love the Lord was life, to depart from that love was spiritual death. Now what intrinsic good is there in obedience, if there is no power to disobey? Do the locks and bolts and bars of our prisons indicate purity of heart? Is not he rather the good man who, walking free his way on earth, chooses the good and refrains from evil? Would divine bars be any better? Had He said to man, "You shall not sin; I will

take from you the power of sin," would that have made a perfect man, when true purity is the voluntary choice of good? The ox, the lamb and the dove have their gentle natures, but they are beasts and birds. Man is man by virtue of his freedom. He is no brute to live and die without choice or reason. Freedom to obey, involves the power to disobey. Freedom of determination is the highest gift to created intelligence; and it implies the noblest qualities, the greatest happiness and the grandest good the Lord can give; and God could not have made his noblest creature—man, with an angel's destiny—and denied him that which lifts him above the brute and makes him man, the noble gift of freedom.

Therefore the power of obedience implies the power of disobedience. We have it, and none can deny the fact. If we had it not, the punishment of crime would be itself a crime. That we justify our courts and penitentiaries, is a confession of our belief in the moral freedom of man. When, therefore, the Lord commanded man to obey his law of love, and gave him the power to obey, the power to disobey was clearly involved in it; and He had either to plant both trees in the ground of his mind, or none. He had either to make him man or make him brute.

It is for man wisely to use this gift of freedom. It is for him to love and live, not to center his

soul on self and die. We are inheritors of this destiny. Let us heed the lesson well, ponder its great privileges, appreciate its divine excellence, admire its tribute to our heaven-born powers, cling to the tree of life, and win the Eden which awaits all open, receptive and obedient souls.





III.

THE WOMAN.

And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept; and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof. And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.—Gen. ii. 21, 22.



WE have arrived in the two previous discourses at certain definite conclusions, based upon reason and proved by Scripture. Among these are the conclusion that the narrative of the Garden of Eden is not a literal history but an allegory; that Adam is not the name of an individual, but a Hebrew term signifying man, or mankind in general, including both sexes; that the Garden of Eden was not a paradise of visible groves, lawns and flowers, but the state of love, innocence, spiritual intelligence and delight in which the people of the world's young morning dwelt; that the tree of life was not a vegetable production planted in the geometrical center of a literal garden from whence man drew his natural support, with ability to exist on earth forever, but was love or the Lord as the controlling element of the mind, with a perception that all life is from Him; that the tree of knowledge was not a natural tree which bore material fruit,

the eating whereof brought sorrow, pain and death into the world, but was self-intelligent and sensuous life, with a perception of self as the only source of existence and the only thing to live for; that the eating from one or the other of these, was not the act of partaking of natural fruit, but was the drawing of the soul's spiritual sustenance from love of God or love of self; and that the command in relation to the fruit of these two trees, was not a precept concerning what the first man ought or ought not to have eaten as healthful natural food, but taught, in the language of correspondence, a lesson setting forth that law of freedom which was planted from the first in human souls, whereby man had the power of choosing to live from the Lord and inherit eternal life, or to live from sense and self in disobedience of God's command.

History furnishes no account of the man of this Golden Age. The traditions, however, of many races as well as sacred books unerringly point to it; mythology throws a glowing radiance of arcadian beauty around its life of simple tastes and quiet happiness; and revelation depicts its loves and joys in divine types and correspondences. And so we are taught that the man of this early age was the very embodiment of innocence and purity, with a meekness and humility truly angelic, basking in the very sunshine of the Lord's love. He

could never, it is true, have coped with the world as it is to-day. To place such a man in our present world, would be almost like placing a lamb in the midst of wolves. Ignorant, as the world now would deem, he unquestionably was. Science and art, learning and skill, luxury and extravagance, as they permeate all present life, were to him unknown. Without doubt nature was beautiful, and the bounteous soil with its spontaneous products supplied his simple wants. It was not necessary for him to be lashed to his daily round of duty by the whip of necessity, nor to work in repulsive fields of labor under the spur of want. Earth was sparsely peopled, and fruitful nature furnished food for all.

But ignorant as he was in worldly things, the now hidden mysteries of God and godly conversation, of heaven and heavenly life, made him wise in a wisdom far above that of to-day. His life was a round of spiritual offices to those about him; his children were reared as heirs, not of the world's wealth and applause, but of spiritual riches and the approval of the Lord. It was indeed the childhood of the race; and those people of the past were very children of the Lord, innocent, beautiful, guileless, angelic, Godlike, but unlearned in the follies which the world prizes and pursues now, unskilled in all the cunning of to-day.

We know that mankind did not remain in that

innocent state. The history of the past—so far back as human chronicles extend—is little more than a record of crime ; and the struggles of the present are but efforts to rise from the moral mire into which the world is plunged. So there has been a great change. Celestial innocence has given place to selfishness and sensuality. This decadence occurred in prehistoric times. No earthly chronicler has left us the record of its progress. It could not have been sudden. Great and rapid moral changes are contrary to all experience. Nations decay by successive steps which run through centuries. Egypt, Athens, Sparta, Rome, sunk to effeminacy, indolence, crime and final destruction, by gradual departures, each so small that it was difficult to mark its separate existence ; and their decline was so slow as to make their complete decadence the work of a hundred or a thousand years.

So was it, probably, that the most ancient people fell. So we read the allegory as set forth in the second and third chapters of Genesis. There was a first step, a second, and—a thousandth. There were also general steps measured by marked peculiarities of retrogression. It was the departure from rectitude of a race, and not that of an individual. That Church of innocence and peace may have lasted many centuries ; how many we cannot tell. From that blissful state to its declen-

sion and final fall, probably was a period of many centuries more.

The first departure from perfect innocence must have been very slight. Such first departures always are. They begin in things so small that we do not see the evil in them. The first slight inclination is the preliminary step to a drunkard's grave; the first boyish cheat at marbles, the small beginning that leads to the forger's cell; the first fruit surreptitiously obtained from the mother's pantry, the trivial offense that may end in highway robbery. It is plain to perceive the nature of the first mistake of these primitive children of God; plain, not because it is so on the face of the literal narrative, but because the symbols by which it is related make it so.

Up to this time the description is that of the Garden of Eden as it was originally created by the Lord. All that from a spiritual point of view is lovely and lofty, is represented in the correspondences employed. By them we determine the character of the people whom they describe. But something new is introduced into Eden now—a feature which was not there when that garden was first planted; which was not there when man was put into the garden thus divinely formed. The woman is introduced upon the scene.

If Eden symbolizes man's state of love, the garden his intelligence, the tree of life the Lord

and his love perceived as the soul's inmost life, the tree of knowledge, the life of self and sense forbidden and as yet unknown, the woman must be symbolic also. What was her spiritual meaning, and what the part she bore in this history of a celestial state and its final loss? For we must remember that Adam was a people, race, or Church. Adam was male and female. The woman, therefore, could not have been the wife of Adam as a man masculine, but must signify something that was adjoined or added to a whole people, after they had for indefinite ages enjoyed this state of love and innocence. As Eden, the garden, the rivers, and the gold, are all of the mind, so must the woman be also. She must be some principle or attribute which man had not possessed before.

Now, what is woman as a representative character, whether in the world, in tradition, or in the Word of God? Clearly she is the embodiment of that principle of the soul denominated affection. In all mythology, in all the symbolic poetry of the older times, in all the traditions of the ages, when love, devotion, religion—any tender sentiment of heart or grace of spirit which was born of gentle affections—was symbolized, delineated, mythologically embodied, painted, or sculptured, it was always under the form of woman. We know that the world now is pretty well upside

down, and that nothing remains just as it ought to be; but the true woman is still devotion, affection, love. That is her distinguishing characteristic as compared with man; and when she loses that, she loses her sublimest feminine quality and distinctive mark. Of the various noble attributes of soul, that is the noblest of all. There may be masculine women and feminine men, but God did not originally create them so.

So is it also in the Bible. The woman symbolizes whatever is characteristically feminine. When the Church is spoken of in reference to its affection for the Lord, although composed of both men and women, it is called "the Bride, the Lamb's wife"; and it is so called, because of the love it is supposed to bear to the Lord as its husband. Thus it was likened, in the parable, to ten virgins who went forth to meet the Bridegroom, that is, the Lord. It was called, in older Scripture, "the virgin daughter of Zion," and "the virgin daughter of Jerusalem." The woman is the embodiment and representative of the principle of affection.

But there is also a dark side to this. The passions, too, were represented by women. Hatred and pride are feminine. But these are affection inverted. They are woman in the opposite of her genuine character. They are the feminine nature as it displays itself when demoralized.

But woman as a sex had existed in Eden previous to this period of the narrative. In the first chapter of Genesis, where the creation of Adam is spoken of, it is said that "God created Adam in his own image; in the image of God created he him, male and female created he them." And this was before man was placed in Eden. For it appears that after men were made, they were elevated, male and female, into the Eden state, and placed in the garden of the Lord. So it was not a wife that was now presented to man. The men of that Church had already each his own. Nor, evidently, could it have been, as a symbol, an affection for the Lord for the first time embodied in those people's lives. They had eaten of the tree of life, and love was already inscribed on their inmost hearts. It was something added to the Eden state. It was an affection that did not originally belong there. As all was made perfect at the planting of Eden, anything added to it must have been slight indeed, and not known as such, but still the first step on the downward path.

We read, indeed, that God said, "It is not good that man should be alone," or, according to a closer rendering of the original Hebrew, "It is not good to man that he should be alone." The implication is, that to man, in his then condition, this being alone did not seem to be a good thing. He began to want something that as yet he did not

have. He was somewhat discontented. And then it is added that the Lord said, "I will make a helpmeet for him." But Arius Montanus, one of the best authorities in Hebrew idiomatic difficulties, gives as the exact translation, "I will make one, as it were himself, before him." The proper rendering of the whole passage, to put it in idiomatic English, seems to be this: "And the Lord God said, It seemeth not good to man that he should be alone; I will make for him one which shall be, as it were himself, before him." This helps us much in tracing the spiritual sense. Adam in his high Eden state, had been altogether the Lord's. He had no consciously-lived selfhood; so high and holy were the people of that age; so close were they to the Lord; so receptive of the Lord's life and influence; so completely under the control of his Spirit, that they had a distinct perception, a realization from actual experience and knowledge, that they were simply living out on earth the Lord's inward influence. It is not more certain to us, as a physical fact, that the blood is coursing through our veins and giving life to the whole body, from the heart to the utmost extremities, than it was to them, as a spiritual fact, that the Lord's influence and life permeated heart, soul and mind, descending into each and every act.

It was a glorious life! Yet the restless spirit

of man, in view of the fact that freedom of choice was his, began to feel that he would a little rather not experience quite so great a dependence on the Lord. He said, as it were, "Oh, how I would like to experience this thing called life, as my own! How pleasant it would be to feel that *I* think, *I* will, *I* desire, *I* speak, *I* act, and not to be always so strongly conscious that it is a higher influence to which I am yielding. I feel now, that in all this love it is God's love in me, that in all this goodness and intelligence it is God's good and truth within me, notwithstanding the sensation that I think and do as of myself; how much better to carry the consciousness that *I* am loving, *I* am good, *I* am intelligent and wise."

The phrase, "to be alone," in most ancient times, was used to denote the most intimate union with the Lord. It was a consciousness of Him alone as the source of life, goodness and intelligence. It was a rendering to Him alone the meed of all good gifts. It was an abiding in Him alone as the only stay and rest in all the things of life. The first deviation consisted, it seems, in a slight discontent with that position, and in a desire to mingle self-consciousness in this respect with the higher consciousness. It would be no desire to deny the Lord as the Creator of life and the Giver of all good gifts, but a willingness to recognize that truth as a matter of faith, while the feeling

would be that the man himself was the author of his own good, and the discoverer of the truths which constituted his own intelligence. It did not seem to him good to be alone in the Lord, but he wanted himself or his selfhood to be more consciously before himself. It was a leaning toward the love of self-consciousness. It was entering into an affection for himself and the things of his selfhood, that is, those of his own personality. Not but that he had an individuality or a selfhood before, but that his life was so pure and disinterested that he was, as it were, in all his meditations, desires and acts, quite unconscious of self. Therefore in this divine parable is it written: "And the Lord God said, It seemeth not good to man to be alone; I will make him one that shall be, as it were himself, before him." And from this time, as the first beginning of his fall, man began, instead of having the Lord and his neighbor constantly before him, to have himself before him.

Now as woman throughout the Word is employed as the symbol of affection in its many varying phases, and as this divinely inspired narrative is in the language of pure symbolism, this affection for self was represented by the woman. And when it is said that the Lord brought the woman unto the man, it is to be understood that He permitted man, created as he was a free being, to have his selfhood as a constantly conscious thing before his mind.

The term *selfhood* does not fully express the idea intended to be conveyed, but it is the best English word at hand. The Latin word *proprium*, or the French *le propre*, would exactly express it. The idea is that man has an individuality of his own. Then he has also that which is the Lord's in him. Somewhat as the earth has a material of its own—its soil and rock and sand. But the sun flows to earth with its light and heat, and gives it vitality. The earth has its own separate existence; but let the sun cease to permeate its atmospheres, waters, and soils, and it were a mere dead thing. So the soul of man has its own personality; but let the Lord and his life cease to flow in, and there would be no flowers of intelligence or fruits of use to make beautiful the garden of his mind. With the sun, the earth blossoms as a rose; without the sun it were a desert. With the Lord, man's mind is a Garden of Eden; without Him it is a wilderness of self, sensuality and sin. Therefore it was a beautiful thing when man lived in the sunlight of the conscious presence of the Lord; it was a sad step when he descended into his selfhood or *proprium*. When this affection for *proprium* was added to his Eden life—when the woman, by his own desire, was brought to the man, it was a step downward.

This state of decline is represented by the deep

sleep which fell upon Adam. To believe that a man called Adam actually went into a deep natural sleep wherein a rib was taken from him which was built into a woman, requires extraordinary credulity. But to think of the sleep into which the early Church fell, as a growing obliviousness to the higher life and the Lord as its center and soul, is an idea entirely consonant with the style in which the Scripture is written, and the purpose for which it was given. To this day when we see an individual or a Church manifesting indifference to religious things, we say it has fallen asleep. So the entrance of mankind into the state of the proprium, was, in comparison with the spiritually wakeful life of the higher state, denominated a deep sleep.

The rib or bone which the Lord took, has somewhat the same meaning as the woman, for it was builded into a woman. It will be seen from the marginal reference, that the proper rendering is not, of the rib "made he a woman," but "builded he a woman." To build, in the Scripture sense, is to raise up that which is degraded. Bones are comparatively dead things; flesh is a living thing. Bones signify what is spiritually dead; flesh what is spiritually alive. The rib means the selfhood, in itself a dead thing; but by closing up the flesh instead thereof, and building it into a woman, is meant the selfhood vitalized, endued

with somewhat of spiritual life, or endowed with heavenly affection; that is to say, the Lord was not willing, if man was determined to enter upon a state in which self should be the conscious element of his existence, to leave his selfhood dry and hard and lifeless. If man was determined to depart from the primal order of his life, He would give him in that departure as much of spiritual life as possible. And He builded his self-consciousness, selfhood, or proprium, into a form of living affection. The dead proprium symbolized by the rib, was builded into a spiritualized affection adjoined to this self-conscious life, symbolized by the woman.

Thus was it, in this divine parable of Eden, that the Lord took the rib—it is not said that He took it out of or away from Adam—and closed up the flesh in the place thereof, and built it into a woman whom He brought to the man. Since that day man has been more or less under the dominion of the proprium. He has thought and loved to think of life and its surroundings as his own. If at any time he has risen above this state and prostrated himself before the throne of God, he may oft and again have been ready to acknowledge the Lord's position as the center and fountain of all, but he still has walked, in some sense, with himself forever before his eyes. Not that the consciousness of personal identity was then or ever,

on the principle of the Hindu Nirvana, swallowed up in the all-engulfing infinitude of God ; but that, at the first, with a clear perception of his own identity and freedom as a finite being, he had so full a consciousness of the Lord as the life power of his soul, and of the Lord's influence as thrilling his entire existence, that his life was raised in all things above the selfhood, and that he did not recognize this last as a motive or element at all entering into the joy of living.

Would we could return to that state ! We may —under different conditions, indeed ; for the fall of the human race has rendered us of a different genius from that of our remote progenitors ; but to all it is given to rise above the proprium. To aid us in this, is the true object of religion or religious teaching. To succeed in it, is to attain the truly Christian life. There is nothing else worth living or striving for. Happy they who can see this truth and live in the light of it !

It is true that this portion of the parable is less easy of comprehension than some others ; that its meaning does not lie quite so close to the surface. To some the explanation may seem abstruse. But it must be remembered that, as the history of Eden is purely symbolic, it must be so in all its parts. As it is a history of minds and states, the sleep and the rib and the woman must denote internal and mental conditions. The law of corre-

spondence according to which the Scripture is written, is consistent, whether applied to Genesis, Isaiah or John. As this law is alike applicable to the unfolding of the true meaning of Genesis and all other portions of sacred Writ, we may be sure that we are treading on safe ground. The woman, in her relation to Adam, will appear again. She was the first to listen to the seductive voice of the serpent; the first to eat of the forbidden tree, and the first to receive the curse. In tracing these events we shall find we have not mistaken her symbolic character.

The lesson of the text is, that evil had its origin in human selfhood, and that the first step is the mother of sin. Have we ever thought how grand a thing life would be, were it elevated above the realm of self? How soon its cankering cares were gone, how far its shadows sent away, how dried of tears its weeping eyes, how soothed to smiles its face of sorrow, were it only freed from this constant sense of self! Could we not be ourselves, yet live for others? Could we not consciously receive the beautiful life of the Lord, yet pour it ever forth into the hearts of those around us? Could we not walk the earth in joy, yet know that all our joys were resting in the blessings we had shed over others' lives? How far the world is from this to-day! How long the path to return to the point from whence the down-

ward journey of the race began ! But, after all, it is the only true religion ; and we will never see this world a Christian world, until we ourselves become a part of its great salvation from the overmastering love of self. Let us pray for it, work for it, gather what fruits we can ; for as the first step led from Eden away, the first retracing step will lead to Eden again.





IV.

THE SERPENT.

Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made.—Gen. iii. 1.

WE have thus far followed the story of Eden from its original planting to the period of man's first departure from the state of his primitive innocence. We have found it to be, not a literal history, but an allegory constructed in accordance with the rules of sacred symbolism. We have seen that it relates to no one individual, but to the primitive race, or the first Church on earth. We have learned that Adam was a people, not a person ; that the Garden of Eden was their state of love, intelligence and happiness, and not a particular place. We have dwelt upon the spiritual beauty of the life of those people, and the wise innocence of their condition, and have taken particular notice of how supreme in their hearts was the principle of love to the Lord. We have seen that the tree of life in the midst of the garden was no natural tree, but the Lord and his love central in the mind as its only faith ; and that eating from the tree was living from this principle and nourishing the whole nature with

this spiritually invigorating food of the soul. Of this, so good, so redolent of eternal life, so joy-giving, man had been commanded to eat and live. But as the tree of life was love of the Lord and heavenly things, the tree of knowledge was love of self and the world. These principles man was commanded not to appropriate as the food of his soul; of this tree he was commanded not to eat, for in doing so he would die.

For a long time man experienced the perfect life of Eden. But he at last began to incline to the selfhood. He had enjoyed the constant perception of the Lord's life and influence controlling his affections, thoughts and actions. He began to desire an independent life. He wanted more self-consciousness. The Lord always permits man, in moral affairs, to have his own way; if he did not, there would be no human freedom. This permission of the Lord in reference to the earliest Church, is represented by his taking the rib and building it into a woman. The rib—hard, dry, bony, in itself dead—symbolizes the self-hood, self-consciousness, or *proprium* of man. His building it into a woman, represents his building of this selfhood into a thing of spiritual affection, and thus endowing it with the higher life or making it a living thing. And the woman became the symbol of the selfhood vivified, elevated, spiritualized. When man inclined to come into

this state of more intense self-consciousness, the Lord in his love so arranged the change, and kept his finger, as it were, on the balance-wheel of his nature, so as to render the selfhood itself capable of being vivified, elevated and regenerated, in order that it might be filled with love to God and all heavenly affections. So man was not yet lost. The rib which symbolized the self-consciousness vitalized with spiritual affection, was so given to the man.

Thus far the allegory of Eden, as we have up to this point studied its meaning.

It is now to be observed that the state of the Church, as still being one of great innocence, is figuratively described by the words, "And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed." There is no gross meaning whatever attaching to this language. Nakedness is a Scripture expression for innocence. It is a symbol as classic as it is ancient, and pervades the paintings and sculpture of Romans and Greeks. Those people were still innocent—so runs the allegory—and in their lives of comparative purity, notwithstanding they had come into a state of greater self-reliance and larger self-consciousness, had naught whereof to be ashamed.

But here there is a change of expression, which, while it does not appear in the authorized English version of the Bible, is very marked in the

original Hebrew. We have seen that the word Adam signifies man in general, or mankind, without relation to sex. But there are in Hebrew, as in most of the ancient languages, two words for man, while in English we have but one. One is *Adam*, and the other *Ish*. Adam is man or mankind. Ish is an individual male person. Now, in sacred allegory these two terms are used for different purposes. While Adam represents the Church at large, Ish signifies the masculine principle of the mind. That is to say, man as distinguished from woman when symbolically used, typifies that principle which renders his a masculine mind. In this sense, as woman is affection, man is intellect. As woman, in true order, is the embodiment of all that is beautiful, graceful and affectionate, man is the embodiment of all that is strong, rugged and intellectual. Woman is not strong in argument, but she is keen in perception. Man's intuitions are unreliable, but his reasoning powers are peculiarly vigorous. The strong work of the world, whether physical or mental, will always be done by man; the refinements of life and its gentler ministrations will ever belong to woman. The world's learning and its progress in science and the mechanic arts and in the intellectual part of religion, will be urged forward by man; but it will become good and great in the higher sense, through the sweet and gentle influence of woman.

In saying that man is intellect and woman affection, it is not meant that woman may not be intellectual and man affectionate; but that in the one, intellect is the predominant characteristic, and gives tone to the whole nature; while in the other, affection is the predominant characteristic, and brings all the other faculties of the mind beneath its sway. Nor is it meant that we do not sometimes see all this reversed. But the exceptions do not overturn or disprove the rule; nor has even the degeneracy of these latter days succeeded in reversing, to any large extent, the well-defined distinction between the sexes.

So also in each mind, whether of man or woman, there is the masculine and feminine element. The man has his intellectual faculties, and his affectional or sentimental nature. But in him, if he be a true man, the first are in control, and give tone, vigor and character to all else within him. The woman may also be endowed with great intelligence; but if she be a true woman, the perceptions, sentiments and affections will give tone, vigor and character to all else within her. This has been recognized in the civilization of all ages; and man stands, by the very law of his creation, as the type of intellect, and woman as that of affection. In inspired writings these types are more pronounced than in fable or tradition. And we find that a sudden change is made in the latter

part of the second chapter of Genesis. Up to this time Adam had been spoken of; now the term is Ish, or man as distinguished from woman. This is because the two elements of the mind of that time—elements common to the mind in all ages—are here distinctively brought into view. As a historical narrative, this would be a contradiction for which no possible reason could be given; but as an allegory in which the two distinctive elements of human nature, each of which performed its part in bringing about the fall of man, are brought prominently into view, it is a necessity.

Having enlarged upon this point which will be found to have a strong bearing upon what follows, and to be necessary to a full understanding of it, let us next consider what this serpent was, which was the cause of so great disaster to the Church in Eden.

In ancient times those were called serpents who had more confidence in sensual things than in revealed truth; and it was not only customary then to compare the sensual principle of human nature to the serpent, but to call it so. But let us be sure that we fully understand the manner in which we use this term. The word sensuality is so commonly mixed in the mind with ideas pertaining to the indulgence of the appetite, or to luxurious and carnal pleasures, that in using it

the first thought is apt to revert to things of this nature. This is only a limited application of the term. Properly, everything is sensual that pertains to the senses. One may be exceedingly sensual, and yet not given to luxuriousness, gluttony or wine-bibbing. The sensual man, in the broader view, is one who believes only on the evidence of his senses. He will deny the existence of spirit because he cannot see it with his natural eyes or touch it with his natural fingers. He will deny the life after death, because it has not been made manifest to his bodily senses. He will deny all things supernatural, because, being neither visible nor tangible, they cannot be chemically analyzed, nor probed by the instruments of the surgeon. He will deny even a God, because He is not visible to the natural eye, and cannot be seen working out his problems of creation and preservation according to his own sensuous conception. The sensual man has never allowed the spiritual plane of his mind to be opened. He has no spiritual grasp. He cannot comprehend a spiritual idea when presented to him. He knows about the things of earth because he sees them—because they are palpable to his senses. He will even believe things he has not seen, so far as they are subjects of sensuous evidence; and will accept the testimony of other people when their reasonings are based upon natural science, such as chemistry,

mechanics or mathematics. But not a ray of spiritual light penetrates his understanding, and he denies the supernatural simply because it is supernatural. He is immersed in sensual things; he lives for this world only, because this only he sees and feels. To him it is the extremest folly to attempt to cultivate the spiritual part of our nature, or to live for the great Hereafter.

The picture thus drawn is that of the extreme sensual man. It has innumerable modifications. The sensual principle may exercise control in various degrees. It may control the man largely or only to a slight extent. It may make him doubtful of spiritual things, without bringing him to the point of absolute denial. It may make him indifferent, without rendering him a conscious skeptic. It may keep him at the point to which he has been educated, without permitting him to go beyond it. It may bind him with the chains of religious tradition, and forbid him from soaring into the realms of genuine truth. Christians even may be sensual men; and rest their faith on historical evidence, or on sensuous miracles. Even apostleship had its sensuous-minded Thomas, who would not believe in the risen Saviour unless he could see in his hands the print of the nails, and lay his finger upon them, and thrust his hand into his side.

The sensual principle is good so far as it is

under the control of the spiritual, but it is bad when it sets up for itself. In the order of creation as related in the allegory of Genesis, Adam was given dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. The earth symbolized the mind; the fish of the sea, the knowledges of things gathered in the memory; the fowls of the air, the thoughts that sweep like winged creatures across the mental firmament; the cattle or beasts, affections of various kinds; the creeping things, the lowest forms or principles of the mind, including the serpent, its sensual principle. Everything was good while man had dominion over it. Even the sensual element of his being led him to interest himself in his natural wants, provide for himself food, clothing and habitation, and study the things of earth as representatives of heavenly things, and proofs of the Lord's mercy, love and care. But when the sensual principle, instead of being under the dominion of the higher and properly human, assumed dominion over it, then it was a very bad thing. The serpent trailed its way through the Eden state of the most ancient Church, until it became wiser than woman, wiser than man, wiser than God; and then Eden became a desolation, and man lost the impress of his Maker.

The most ancient people denominated the sensual nature the serpent, because as serpents live close to the earth, so does the sensual principle cling closely to the world, to nature, and things of sense. The symbol is maintained throughout the Scripture. Our Lord called the Pharisees, "Ye serpents; ye generation of vipers," in relation to their having made religion a mere thing of sensuous ceremony. The devil is called a serpent (Rev. xii. 9), because of his desire to overthrow the dominion of the spiritual and celestial in man, and to seduce him by specious and sensuous reasonings. And these reasonings, arguments and seductive influences of the sensual nature, are denominated in Scripture the poison of the serpent (Ps. lviii. 3-6). Therefore in this allegory of Eden, the serpent is said to be more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made; because, of all cunning arts, of all sophistry and sophistical reasoning, of all promises that are sweet to the ear and destructive to the soul, those employed by the sensual nature and by sensuous men are the most sweet, cunning and sophistical, yet false and soul destroying. The serpent of the soul—the sensuous principle—is the most false and subtle of all the beasts of the field, of all the affections of the mind.

Yet the Lord made it. But He made it good. He put it in its place. He placed it under the

dominion of man, and man recognized this. For when it is said that, "Out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air, and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them; and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof," a very suggestive truth is couched under the symbolism. It means that Adam, or primitive man, was aware of the existence of the various affections of the mind signified by the different beasts of the field, and of the various forms of thought signified by every fowl of the air. By the Lord's bringing the beasts and birds to him, is meant that in the providence of God his various forms of affection and thought were permitted to arrange themselves before his mind as matters of conscious knowledge and reflection. But by Adam's giving them names, is signified that he could call them all by their right names, that is, could recognize their comparative value and quality, and assign to each, with quick intuition, its proper sphere.

For every name in olden times expressed the character or quality of the object named; and to name a thing was to designate its character or determine its quality. For symbolism was founded on the very nature of things, and the man of that time was able to analyze the attributes of his soul, and to name each correctly, and

estimate its relative value, and assign to it its proper rank. Thus the lamb and the dove element—the innocence of the soul—would be elevated; but the serpent element—the sensual nature—would be used as a servant and not as a master. So among the other beasts of the field, to give the serpent its name was to estimate sensuous things at their true value, to understand their office as being simply to enable man to perform his duties in this world, to permit them to testify concerning earth as a representative of heaven, and to use them as testimonies to the existence of the Lord, and to his nature, love and care. But that sensuous reasonings should close up the spiritual plane of the mind, cut off the power of spiritual thought, darken the pathway to immortality and heaven, or deny their Creator and Lord, such a thought could not be even entertained.

But when man began to incline to his selfhood, to desire to be guided more by himself and less by the Lord, then the power of the serpent began to assert itself. While men were conscious of the Lord as their guide, the serpent could have nothing to say on spiritual subjects. He went his way quietly on his destined earthly round of duty. True, after the inclination to the *proprium*, there was love, and innocence, and peace, still in a modified form, breathing through all the fields of Eden. But self-love or the *proprium*

in its best form, is an unsafe guide. If it looks to the Lord indeed, it is safe ; but if it looks anywhere else it is lost. And it does not look to the Lord except in the case when man is wholly above its influence.

We have seen how man departed from his first estate, and inclined to the selfhood. We have followed the allegory as it described the fact. We have found, also, that with his greater self-consciousness, he was still endowed with a principle of goodness and innocence. The woman became a symbol of this affection for the selfhood. A new title is used for man, meaning not mankind as Adam did, but man as distinguished from woman. And this term for man is a symbol of the intellectual nature. So the serpent first applied himself to the woman. In other words, the sensuous principle of the mind began its work upon the selfhood. Sensual and sophistical reasonings about spiritual things, began to be used in place of the celestial perceptions which once had sway ; and they went direct to the *proprium* as the easiest thing to seduce. Perhaps there were in those days Tom Paines, Voltaires, and Ingersolls to say to the *proprium*, " Yea, hath God said ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden," to insinuate a doubt whether the words of the Lord were true ; whether the love-life was the best life ; whether the Lord or self was the real

guide; whether these so-called perceptions were not delusions; whether the best evidence was not the evidence of the senses; whether this being led by self was not a pleasant experience; whether it was really death to the soul; whether these old ideas of their forefathers were not mere superstitions having no foundation in common sense; and a hundred other similar doubts which the sensual principle is capable of insinuating, and then of satisfactorily answering to inflated self-consciousness and pride.

So was it, doubtless, that the serpent talked to the woman; and the woman, touched with the argument, goes direct to the man. That is, self-love being beguiled, in its turn beguiles the intellect. This, perhaps, was not the work of a year, nor of a hundred years. It was the working of the leaven of sensuousness in the human family for thousands of years, probably, dragging it down to the lower levels of life.

And in this we find the true history of the origin of evil. Evil originated, not in the machinations of a serpent who beguiled a single woman, but in self-love yielding to arguments founded on sensuous appearances. Man was created upright, but free. He inclined to self; he listened to the delusive whisperings of sense and his sensual nature; he let go his hold on God and his love, and so brought evil into the world.

We leave the subject here to resume it again—for the story of the serpent is yet but half told.

But of one thing we may all be conscious. The origin of evil is still in every soul, the whispering of the serpent to the woman. Self-consciousness is to most people their very life. Our love of sensuous things drags us down to the lowest levels. If we deny God and immortality, it is the delusion of sense. If we hesitate or doubt, it is the delusion of sense. If we cannot grasp spiritual thoughts, it is because we are deluded by sense. If we cannot open our understandings to the light that comes only from on high, it is sense that hinders. And through all our denials and doubts, it is sense and its delusions that rule the soul. It comes to us in many forms, deceives in many ways, but it comes always in hatred of that which is holy. It drowns the soul in dissipation or overwhelms it in pleasures; it elates it with ambition; it makes it in dreams a demi-god. It puts self in the center of its little universe, and causes all things to revolve around it. It bends all activities, all beings, all life, to serve one's personal ends, whether of ambition, pleasure or greed. And what is worse than all, it persuades the soul that this is the only right and proper thing to do, that it has the sanction of religion, and that anything else is superstition. This serpent is the deluding principle of the universe. It

warms itself by every fireside ; it hides itself in every social gathering ; it conceals itself in workshop and store, and holds high carnival on change ; it does our buying and selling ; its voice is heard in every passing conversation ; it governs wherever rulers congregate ; and it is insidiously coiled in the very aisles and pews of our churches. It trails its slimy way in highways and byways, homes and hearts, and its poison pervades the world. Ah ! could we rise above these delusions of sense, could we but believe in and follow the Lord with half the zeal and energy with which we listen to and serve the serpent, this were a world worth living in. We can—we must. It is the only true salvation.






V.

THE FORBIDDEN FRUIT.

And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.—Gen. iii. 6.

S we familiarize our minds with the idea that this narrative of the Garden of Eden is purely allegorical, we experience less and less difficulty in grasping its real meaning, and in satisfactorily applying the laws of symbolism to its interpretation. The different events begin to group themselves naturally around the central truth, that Adam was the whole Church of the early age of the world, and not a single individual. We learn from the allegory that these people lived in the Garden of Eden, that is, in innocence and peace, in the very presence of the Lord and under his holy and immediate influence; that they remained in this state for a long period, eating of the tree of life in the midst of the garden, that is, living from the Lord as the inmost principle of thought and love; that they began to desire to feel the spiritual life as more their own and less the Lord's in them; that they inclined more and

more to self-consciousness or the selfhood ; and then the sensual principle—the serpent—began to assume control of the mind and to become a conspicuous figure in this Garden.

Sensuousness I have defined as the disposition to limit one's life to the small area of existence which comes within the purview of the natural senses. The principle is broad in its scope, but it invests life with the merely natural, and rejects, as a thing undesirable or unknowable, the supernatural. If we are Christians, under the influence of this principle we are apt to be very weak or very indifferent ones. If we seem to be earnest in our faith, that faith is based upon what we conceive to be a correct historical record of the coming of Christ, and of the miraculous evidence by which his character was proven. If, however, we are hurried by its advice, or under the impetus of its insinuations, away from Christianity, it forbids us to recognize God because natural sense has never seen Him ; or to believe in another life, because natural law has been unable to prove it ; or even to acknowledge the existence of the soul, because no dissecting knife has ever succeeded in reaching its seat. It is a harsh term, perhaps, to apply to so eminent a scientist as Tyndall, yet he is a strong type of the sensuous man, when he asserts in substance : I do not deny God, for I know nothing about Him ; yet I do

not believe in God, for these senses of mine have never seen Him, felt Him or touched Him. I believe only what sense and natural science prove. There may be plenty of undiscovered truths, but I rest my faith only in what I scientifically know.

Very moral men may, after this manner, be sensualists. But the effect of such sensuous reasoning is demoralizing in the extreme. Pride may keep the strong sensual man from moral degradation. But when you efface from the mind spiritual intelligence, and substitute natural reason; or when you darken those spiritual lights, which are the stars of its higher consciousness penetrating all dark places with spiritual discernment, you take away that which gives this world its only life and hope. Then the man of weak mind, or he who has no stay of pride, sinks into dissipation and debauchery; this world becomes his all in all; its money, fame or pleasure, his only hope and joy; himself and his own gratification the only things worth living for. The Lord, the divine Sun, is blotted from his firmament; beyond the grave there is naught for him but darkness; to make the most of this world is his supreme purpose. So the serpent—type of the sensual nature—as monitor and guide, is the world's ruin.

What wonder, then, that in olden times, when he once gained the ear of those who dwelt in Eden, he advised them to their fall. Subtle he

was and bold ; “ More subtle than any wild beast of the field.” Is not the sensual nature the most crafty of all the affections of the mind ? What argument so specious as that which insinuates questions like these : Who but a fool would believe in that which is not evident to the senses ? Why should you deny yourselves the delights of self, of enjoyments so palpable and abounding, of pleasures so exquisite and close at hand, in the vain pursuit of that phantom called eternal life, that folly of superstitious follies called unselfishness ?

So to the Eden people of old, it was the sensuous thought entering into the mind—the serpent trailing his tortuous way into life—which did the mischief that was done. The woman, as the symbol of affection in general, here, in view of the manner in which her name is used in the allegory, is made to represent specifically the affection for the selfhood. It was to her, therefore, to the selfhood ever ready to listen to any suggestion which increased its power or pleasure, that the serpent applied itself. “ Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of the tree of the garden ? ” Was it really true that God had counseled them not to draw spiritual life from any perception of the mind which could grow in such a place as Eden ? Were not its trees all good ? Were not all the perceptions which grew in the soil of innocence, purity and love, genuine

and true? Why forbid themselves anything that came from so divine a source? This was sophistry, the serpent's cunning, in its most unadulterated form. Without mentioning the tree of knowledge, this reasoning included it—evidently insinuating that it also must be good, because it was one of the trees of Eden. Eden was all good, how could any of its trees be bad? The Eden state was all purity, how could any perception of the mind be false? Follow this new dictate, was the insinuation; it is of Eden in the heart, and it is therefore right.

But the selfhood was not immediately satisfied. It had been endowed by the Lord with spiritual life; it had been elevated into spiritual atmospheres; and even the self-consciousness, in its higher state, was not so easily convinced. So the woman's answer to the serpent's delusive insinuation was: "We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die." It was evident that of all the trees of the garden they might eat, with this single exception. All perceptions of the mind were from the Lord; all that belonged to the Eden state and was rooted in its soil—perceptions of truth, of good, of love, of God, and whatsoever intelligence sprang from them—all these

were from the Lord. But the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was the idea of self as the origin of spiritual life, and that certainly was not from the Lord. They still saw this; it was not entirely obliterated from their consciousness. And God had said that not only should they not eat of it, not only ought they not to conceive of the soul's life as a thing of self, but they must not touch it, they must not even dream of such a thing, they must not for a moment come in contact with such an experience. For the consequence of so doing would be that they would die. All relapsing into self is spiritual death. It is not the decease of the body, nor the annihilation of the soul. It is not ceasing to think, will and act. It is the death of good—the death of genuine disinterested love; the lapsing into evil and falsity; the loss of all power to know, appreciate, live, or even comprehend the spiritual side of life, and God as its giver. This is to die in the spiritual sense.

But the serpent seemed to speak of natural death. He always speaks naturally. And it is of the nature of the sensual principle to lead us away from the true meaning of things, and make us satisfied to rest in mere appearances. So the serpent said to the woman, that is, the sensual element replied to the doubts of the better selfhood, "Ye shall not surely die; for God doth know that in the day ye

eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."

Now it is a fact that, to this day, so inclined are the large mass of people to take sensuous views of things, that it is generally believed that natural death came into the world because two individuals, Adam and Eve, ate of the fruit of a natural tree. It is not seen that mankind fell, not because of any natural act of disobedience, nor because of anything heedlessly done on the natural plane, but because they became selfish, worldly and sensual. The first idea so generally accepted, is devoid of all rationality; the other commends itself to reason and common sense.

"Ye shall not surely die," said the serpent. Instead thereof, "Your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." That their eyes would be opened, means that their understandings would be enlightened. That they would be as gods knowing good and evil, means that their power to distinguish between good and evil would be seen or thought of as a faculty originating in themselves; and that thus each one would be, as it were, a god unto himself, deciding for himself and from himself, and in the light of his own intelligence, what was good and what was evil.

Now, the effect of such an idea as this, we see plainly enough in the world's present condition. When human reason decides as to what is truth

and what is falsity, with the serpent as chief pleader and the selfhood as umpire, spiritual truth has no chance of acceptance. And when human reason is, under the same conditions, the arbiter of good and evil, good becomes whatever panders to the pleasure, profit and aggrandizement of one's self, and evil whatever is in opposition thereto. Each man is a god unto himself; each man decides for himself; each man is self-glorified. This was the tendency with our early progenitors. The serpent that now holds high carnival in the world, was then exerting his most seductive influence.

We have considered the tree of life as the Lord and his love, and the tree of knowledge as self and science. Eating of the one or the other symbolizes appropriating the one or the other of these principles to the life of the soul. We know that natural eating is for the sustenance and invigoration of the natural body. The food, or the life-giving elements of the food, are conveyed by the blood to the various organs of the system, and distributed according to the needs of this or that portion of the body. Its many parts, the brain, the muscle, the flesh, the bone, the nervous fluid, the cuticle, each and all partake of the blessings and the benefits. And the body lives and grows and strengthens by means of the food whereof it partakes; and the condition of the body, whether

healthy or diseased, well or ill, depends very much on the character of its food. Good food makes a sound body; insufficient or improper food, an unsound one.

The correspondence of the natural with the spiritual system and its economy is exact. It is a matter of the greatest consequence whether we partake of nourishing spiritual diet or of that which is injurious. The Word of God everywhere recognizes this. It is for this reason that our Lord says by the mouth of his prophet, "Eat ye what is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness" (Isa. lv. 2); and that He said, when on earth, "Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you" (John vi. 27). Again, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever" (John vi. 51). And again, "He that eateth me, even he shall live by me" (John vi. 57). Say we not well, then, when we assert that the Lord is the veritable tree of life which grows in the midst of Eden? Draw we then our food from Him, eat we of the fruit of that divine tree, recognize we his influence within our souls, obey we all his commands in their true spirit and intent, love we the higher life proceeding from the Lord who is in the midst of our mental garden, then truly do we live. The

fruit of the tree of life is all the goodness and wisdom which we receive from the Lord—humbly acknowledging that it is his and not our own—and appropriate to the upbuilding and sustenance of the soul. Eat we of the fruit of that tree, and its life-giving principles flow down into every least thing of the spirit. They give light to the understanding, purity to the desire, sweetness to the affections, wisdom to the thought; they go down into the labors and works of the hands, and spiritualize every least act of life. They nourish, invigorate, sustain and build up the spiritual man into a glorious image and likeness of God. Life becomes love in its highest sense, and the joy of existence a thing unutterable!

But the tree of knowledge is self and science. Its fruit is error and falsity, evil and crime. We throw aside revelation; we deny its truth; we divorce our understanding from its fountain of wisdom; and we say, Let us rely on science or the senses. We read no more the commandments of God; we relegate those precepts to the realm of the impracticable; we grow indifferent to the voice of the Lord as it fain would speak to us in the garden of the mind; and we say, Let us consider self-preservation, and the wealth, honors and pleasures of the world, as the things most near at hand and of most immediate need. Then we eat of the fruit of the forbidden tree. The

Lord did not desire man's spiritual death. He would not have him rest in mere worldly joys when there is a higher life; nor live merely for self when the well-being of his kind demands his services; nor study only his interest in this world, when there is an eternal world for which he was placed here to prepare. He would not have him shrivel his faculties, when they were made for wide expansion; nor invert the law of life when he is capable of enjoying its unspeakable blessings; nor become a creature of disorder and selfishness, when he was created in the grandest order and for the highest use. He would not have him confine his aims and ends to the body and this world, nor his reasoning faculties to natural science, when by doing so he loses the higher wisdom and fails to attain the higher and purer life. He would not have him wallow in the filthy mire of sensuous delights, when there are sweet fields of heavenly joy wherein to live and take pleasure. He would not have him a mere animal, when He had created him to be an angel. For as the fruit of the tree of life was goodness and wisdom, the fruit of the tree of knowledge was evil and error, crime and insanity. Therefore was it that the Lord commanded man not to eat of this, the forbidden fruit. God is not possessed of the human passion of pride. He did not utter an arbitrary edict for the sake of enjoying man's servile obedi-

ence. He did not make life and happiness to depend on refraining from a certain natural fruit. It is only sensuous thought that so drags the Lord down to the level of human frailty. He commanded man not to live from self, not to draw his mental food from sensuous science, not to place his life in mere knowledge ; because, if he did, his spiritual nature would die. What He commanded was solely for man's own happiness and good.

But man ate. He no longer looked to the Lord for the food of his soul, but to self. He lost sight of those words of divine beauty, "He that eateth me, even he shall live by me ;" and he made a god of himself instead, and recognized no other source of life. This food he ate, or appropriated as the life of his soul. With this he nourished all his faculties. It went through his whole system ; it permeated his whole character ; it poisoned his affections ; it darkened his understanding ; it nourished hatreds, cruelties and revenges ; it rendered him incapable of spiritual perception ; it capacitated him for crime ; and it flung the world, as its final outcome, into that seething cauldron of misery, war and unrest, which is so largely our lot to-day. And so will the world remain until we cease to eat of the forbidden fruit, the source of all our woe, and return to Eden and the Lord.

There is an expression introduced into the third chapter of Genesis, which seems contradictory of

the second. The tree of knowledge is here said to be in the midst of the garden ; whereas previously it was asserted that the tree of life was in the midst of the garden. It is one of those points of which there are many, which infidel writers, reasoning from the serpent's point of view, hold up to prove the inconsistency and foolishness of Scripture. They reason from the standpoint of the letter. If you tell them it is a spiritual allegory, they will laugh at you ; and if you attempt to show them that it is, they will understand you no more than if you spoke in an unknown tongue. Their spiritual understanding is closed to the higher light. But in the spiritual sense of these and all similar passages, the apparent inconsistency vanishes. The explanation is simply this : In the primitive condition of the people of the first Church, just as they were placed in the Eden state, the tree of life, or the Lord and his love, was in the midst of the garden ; love occupied the central place in the soul ; for it was in the very inmost of the heart, and the central source of the mind's intelligence. But after they began to listen to the serpent, the tree of life occupied no more the center, but the tree of knowledge took its place in the inmost of the soul, and self assumed the position which the Lord had previously held.

But in explaining these symbols, in order to bring out their meaning in bold relief, we find

ourselves sometimes painting the principles represented in their extremest colors. Eating of the tree of knowledge, like all other spiritual habits, is a thing that comes gradually, and becomes a habit only by a slow process. The world at that early age did not change in a day, nor in a year, perhaps not in a hundred years. The serpent's voice, feeble at first, grew strong as time rolled on. Listened to at the beginning but feebly, the attention of the race became more fixed and their inclination to obey more strong as listening became a habit. Constant dallying with the subject on the part of man, gradually made the serpent more bold. The woman—the affection for the selfhood—was first approached. It was only by slow degrees she began to see that this fruit of the tree of knowledge was “good for food,” or began to consider sense and science as things in themselves good. Yielding to this, they became also “pleasant to the eyes,” in other words, agreeable to the understanding. And finally they were seen by the selfhood to be things “to be desired to make one wise ;” that is, that they were really desirable, because they gratified the pride of self-intelligence, and made the man eminently wise in his own eyes.

And thus—so runs the narrative—when the woman saw these things “she took of the fruit

thereof and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat."

Man as distinguished from woman, as was observed in a former discourse, symbolizes the intellect. Thus it was the woman who ate first—the love of self or the *proprium*. And then she in turn persuaded the man to eat. When the love of self appropriated as its food the delusions of sense, the intellect soon yielded its concurrence. It is the experience of all time. When we are on the downward path, what we love we are very apt to persuade ourselves is right. Into the arms of whatever evil the heart throws itself, intellect and reason are called upon for their assent, and they soon yield. The fall of each and every man and woman begins and ends in a similar way.

But as before observed, we have described the symbols in their more extreme meanings. The fall was gradual, extending perhaps through hundreds or even thousands of years. The fruit of the tree of knowledge changed its quality as time went on. The first aberration from the primal condition, was in life. From generation to generation the Adamic Church inclined to self and evil more and more. Still the true life would be acknowledged; but it would become, as one generation succeeded another, more and more a matter of mere faith, and less and less a matter of experience. Then gradually, with many, faith

itself would begin to yield, while perhaps with others it would be longer retained. Thus at first the fruit of the forbidden tree was faith as the basis of religion. This also would be forbidden, because love is its true basis. Then its fruit became error; and at last positive falsity. The eating by the woman was a work of centuries; the offering to the man and his eating a work of centuries more. The letter makes it, in the fall of a man, the work of a day; the spirit makes it, in the fall of a race, the work of a period of indefinite and unknown length.

And so let us still follow the lesson in our hearts, and contemplate all its admonitions as given to make us wiser in our generation. There is only one tree whose fruit is life, for us as well as for our early progenitors. It is the Lord himself enthroned within the heart. It is that principle of love, so large, so all-embracing, so divine, that the mind of its possessor is an Eden of intelligence and delight. Its branches are far reaching; its roots strike deep; its fruits are all goodness and wisdom, and they nourish the soul from its centers of affection and thought to its extremities of active life and work. Other trees there are in the garden which contribute to life; other perceptions of the soul which are suggested from within and without; but this tree is Life Itself. Let us ask nothing of sense and science,

except that they be willing servants of the Lord and love. Let us eat of no fruit that will exalt sense and drag down the soul, that will magnify self and degrade the Lord. Spiritual life and spiritual death are before us, according to the kind of fruit our souls eat or appropriate. Let us eat of the fruit of the tree of life and truly live!





VI.

THE CURSE.

And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it, cursed is the ground for thy sake.—Gen. iii. 17.

THE curses expressed in the Bible are peculiar. They bear no similarity to those evoked by human passion. When man, under the influence of a feeling that is born of sin, bursts forth into profane ravings against the neighbor, invoking maledictions on his head, he speaks under the prompting influence of hell. It is anger, or resentment, or revenge, wounded pride or defeated purpose, that would deal damnation and ruin to the offending party. Resentment in any form is as far from the Lord's nature as it is possible for anything to be.

Is it not strange that men will persistently attribute to God that which all condemn in a professed servant of God? Is it not amazing that they will clothe the Divine Being with human passions, when the whole end and aim of Christianity is to lead man to curb and subdue the same passions? Who would justify resentments, maledictions or curses in a Christian? And how

shall we ascribe those attributes to Him, the reception of whose spirit alone it is that makes one a Christian?

How then are we to understand the Scripture which seems to attribute cursings to God? The answer is simple. In the literal sense, the language of the Bible is that of appearance; in the spiritual sense it is that of reality. And that meaning is generally attributed to it by man, which accords with his own instincts. This last assertion is true of our every-day conversation. If a man is brutal, there is an element of brutality entering into his conception of every word that is addressed to him. If he is sensual, there is to him an element of sensuality which enters into every expression that he hears. If he is essentially immodest, his mind instinctively turns the purest words into expressions of beastly sentiment. But if he is spiritual, to him all things are clothed with spirituality; if pure, all things with purity.

To all expressions, therefore, there is a higher import and a lower. The lower the thought, the lower the sense it will attach to words; the higher the thought, the more elevated the idea, and the more exalted its conception of the meaning which expressions are designed to convey. And this has caused the world's trouble in construing holy Writ. A pagan age has invested its terms with pagan meanings; a sensuous age with sensuous

ideas; the natural mind with gross natural conceptions.

Now in this matter of cursings, as human utterances they are evil in themselves, and spring from evil in the heart of him who utters them. And men of evil passions instinctively ascribe to the Lord, when they read expressions of this kind, the same fire of passion which they feel within themselves. But the Lord is a Being of infinite love, charity and mercy. A curse, therefore, when attributed in the Scripture to Him, must be an expression of that love, charity and mercy; for we cannot think of Him as capable of expressing anything else. When the poet says,

“The angry sun on waste Sahara’s plain
Shone down, blasting all nature with its presence,”

we do not, in our poetic ardor, literally attribute to the sun a peculiar anger with the desert of Sahara above all other lands, under the influence of which it withers all attempts at herbage, and dries up ruthlessly each bubbling fount or stream. We know that it is but a poetical method of expressing a fact resulting from the atmospheric and climatic conditions of that arid region. We know that it is the same sun which shines so beneficently on our own prolific land. He sends forth the same heat, and the same amount and kind, to America that he does to Sahara. But our position, and our

atmospheric and climatic conditions are such, that we receive his beams in luxuriant forms of verdure, while Sahara receives them in sterile sands.

So with human minds. This sun of everlasting light, the Word of God, sends forth his beams of truth and love with equal force, to the grossest sensualist and the most exalted Christian. How they receive these beams, whether as a sterile desert or as a fertile garden, depends upon themselves. Yet the light and heat as they come from their divine source, are the same for all. But as the same sun blasts in some climes and beautifies in others, according to the characteristics or condition of the region which receives it, so the same law of love that gives existence and life to all, if it is received in order and in answering love, renders beautiful the soul of its recipient; but if received in disorder and hate, its very power of giving life is turned into a means of death.

It is on this principle that the divine gift of life received in innocence and joy, lived in its own spirit and reflected back to its Creator in perfect images, is, in the language of holy writ, "the blessing of the Lord;" but the same divine gift received in a selfish nature, lived in perverted form, and reflected back in hideous distortions, is, in the language of holy writ, "the curse of the Lord." How perfectly a mirror without any flaw or irregularity in its surface, reflects the human

countenance ! But you have seen, perhaps, those mirrors which turn the human figure upside down, or distort every feature of the face. The original is perfect enough ; it is the reflection which is right or wrong. The divine original in the soul of man, is pure and upright. It is the use we make of our God-given faculties—the manner in which the soul receives and reflects the influent life, which renders it beautiful or monstrous in its proportion and form.

Life given of the Lord, is a blessing to him who uses it aright, and a curse to him who perverts it. This is the blessing and the curse. It seems as if the latter were of God, and the natural mind so views it. It really is of man ; and the spiritual mind reads of God's curse, as the poet reads of the angry sun. Each one reads according to his nature. But he who follows the Word of God in its spirit, thinks of the curse of the Lord as the angels think of it—as the divine mercy resting with man amid the very ruins of his nature, and rendering him as happy as possible in the dreary region of life he has sought and found. In other words, God's curse is the divine law of life—a ruin and a wreck through man's perversity, but Divinity still working amid those ruins to save him from a worse desolation even on his chosen plane. Riches are a blessing to him who uses them aright, a curse to him who makes of them the mere instru-

ments of self-gratification. Health is a blessing to him who nobly works in its strength for life's elevation, a curse to him who uses it for the larger gratification of his love of sensual pleasure. Education is a blessing to him who develops by its means an enlarged capacity for usefulness, a curse to him who employs it to render himself a greater adept in crime. The great gift of life is a blessing to him who lives in true order according to the Divine intent, but a curse to him who inverts its heavenly purpose and makes it a means of mischief to the world. When, therefore, we read in the Word of God, of the Lord's blessings, we are to understand his gifts of good freely received and righteously applied or divinely lived; but when we read of his curses, we are to understand his good gifts misapplied and wickedly perverted to evil purposes and selfish ends. It is this style of Scripture from which poetry has borrowed its character, and of which it is a fair exponent oftener than matter-of-fact prose.

Having thus enlarged upon the nature of the curse, let us take a rapid review of the spiritual meaning of that portion of the parable at which we have now arrived. The primitive church called Adam, having departed from its pristine innocence, having inclined to the selfhood or *proprium*, having been seduced by the serpent to eat of the tree of sense and science, trended

rapidly downward. Then it is said that "the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked." When it had been said, before the temptation, that "they were both naked and not ashamed," it was, in the spiritual sense, a description of their innocence. In that innocent state there was nothing whereof they needed to be ashamed. Now, however, their eyes were opened; but to what? Why, to the things of self and sense, in a manner in which their forefathers by no means understood them. Their eyes were opened to see that they regarded self and the world as the chief things in life, and spiritual things as matters of secondary importance; while their progenitors, in the wise innocence of their hearts, had regarded spiritual attainments as the grand purpose of life, and self and the world as merely instrumental means toward this great end. So they saw their nakedness; that is, they became aware that they were unclothed with spiritual principles, and, therefore, they sought to invest themselves with merely natural good. For, as the vine is the oft-repeated symbol of spiritual good, so the fig-tree is that of natural good. And this clothing the life with merely external or moral virtues, is correspondentially described in the statement that "they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons."

Then "they heard the voice of the Lord going

forth in the garden." The voice of the Lord is any inward dictate which emanates from Him. "Going forth" is the correct translation, not "walking" as the authorized version has it. It was not the Lord walking in a natural garden, and speaking face to face with a man and woman. It was an inward dictate of conscience, the voice of the Lord, which those people experienced, going forth in the garden of the intelligence of which they were yet possessed, calling them to account for the wretched mistake they had made. So they "hid themselves from the face of the Lord;" that is, they shut out the divine dictate and the divine countenance from their minds; and they hid themselves among the trees of the garden, that is, they averted themselves from the Lord or his dictates by withdrawing into the perceptions of their own self-intelligence.

It is the usual story, first enacted in the ancient garden. When man wants to do wrong, when he wants to be selfish, when he wants to gorge himself with worldly pleasure, the inward voice of the Lord forbids; yet he turns from it, shuts out the voice that would counsel and correct—the voice of divine wisdom and virtue—and justifies himself by the delusive sophistry of his self-intelligence. So did the people of the most ancient times. And when they seriously sought to shut out the suggestions which the Lord would fain

make to mind and heart they brought the curse upon themselves. And then as an excuse for this, the reply was made by the *proprium*—the woman—to the conscience or the Lord's voice, "The serpent beguiled me and I did eat;" meaning, "The sensual principle of my nature has been too strong for me, and I have yielded to it because I could not resist its influence." The excuse, however, is but a lame one, and helps nothing. An effort to rise from the position into which they had fallen, had been far better than a mere excuse for their degradation. It was simply, however, what the man now does every day, who, while acknowledging the abstract holiness of the Lord's instructions, persists in saying, "It is not possible for any one to keep the divine commandments." So the curse followed—the fault of man entirely, and not of the Lord. It was the consequence of departing from the true order of life, and not an arbitrary decree of God. It was the inherent demoralization caused by yielding to the *proprium*, and not an edict of divine wrath.

"And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle and above every beast of the field." Let us constantly bear in mind that this whole narrative is an allegory. Nothing of it transpired as a literal conversation of the Lord with man, woman, or serpent. When it reads

that "the Lord God said," it is meant that thus and so the Lord viewed the matter; or, that thus and so is it in the light of divine truth. Each expression is the statement of a truth couched in correspondential language. Thus, in the Lord's view, or in the light of divine truth, the sensual principle or the serpent had become cursed; and this above all the other affections of the mind, symbolized by the expression, "Above all cattle and above every beast of the field." It had so come to be cursed, in becoming the lowest, the most depraved, the most groveling, of all portions of human nature. Nothing is lower than sensuality. Therefore it is said, "Upon thy belly shalt thou go"—a significant statement of the gross, earthly, corporeal and bestial character of the sensual principle under the conditions to which it had brought itself. It had been a good thing and spiritually erect when in its proper place, as a servant doing the bidding of the higher nature—an agent of the latter in its earthly work. But when it assumed to be master and seduced the mind and heart, erect no more it groveled on the lowest earthly plane. It ate or lived upon the mere dust and ashes of life, fed upon corporeal and terrestrial ideas and enjoyments.

And another result of the curse, or the degradation of the sensual nature, was expressed in the words, "I will put enmity between thee and the

woman, and between thy seed and her seed." The woman, as we have before shown, represents the affectional nature. In this connection, as there is enmity between her and the serpent, and as she was the predestined symbol of the Church in its affectional or emotional aspect, it was a simple statement of the truth, that henceforth there would be war between the genuine affection for spiritual things in the Church, and sensualism in all its forms. The seed of the serpent, or the final fruit of sensuality, was infidelity. The seed of the woman, or the wonderful issue which was to be born of the future Church, was Christ and Christianity. The enmity between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman, was a prophecy of the war to be inaugurated by infidelity—whether Jewish, pagan, or modern—in respect to Christ and his religion. Thus the seed of the serpent has bruised his heel, that is, the heel of Christ, both in the crucifixion of his body, and in his crucifixion in every heart which has burned with hatred towards Him and the religion He taught. And the seed of the woman has bruised the serpent's head in every victory, and on the arena of every heart where true Christianity has gained a triumph over the crafty seductions of infidelity. "Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth

children ; and thy obedience (the true rendering) shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." The woman is here, as in the former verse, the woman of prophecy ; she is the true Church in its affectional aspect ; she is the affection for truth and goodness in the minds of the members of the Church. No allusion is here made to natural conceptions or births. That is the letter ; and the letter is only the basis, symbol, or correspondent of the spirit. The allusion is to those things which are born of spiritual affection, to all good feelings, desires and promptings, to all new conceptions of truth, of salvation, of heaven, of the Lord. Again the prophecy is not of what the Lord does, although it is said, "I will multiply," etc. It is a statement of the inevitable consequence of human degradation and of the unavoidable condition which the human race takes on, in permitting itself to be degraded.

Those consequences to the serpent or sensuous nature, we have seen. The consequences to the woman or the affectional nature, are here described. These have no relation to the conceptions and births of natural children. They are the new conceptions of spiritual truth, and the new births of good desires, feelings and promptings. It is of these children of the soul that it is said, "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception ; in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children."

In the Eden state all the faculties developed into good, naturally, without struggle, pain or sorrow. Now we emerge from natural states into spiritual, through much conflict, through dark temptations, through severe inward combats, through painful losses of things we had set our hearts upon, through many sighs and tears. Then truth came to the mind in lightning flashes, quick, clear and unmistakable; to hear spiritual truth, was to grasp it and believe it. Now we have to wrestle with it, reason about it, sometimes almost to agonize over it, in order to its reception. These children of the spiritual affections, are conceived in sorrow and brought forth through much affliction. It is part of the curse. It is the result of a fallen state. It is easy to descend; but to reascend the mountain of the Lord, is a weary work indeed. It is added, "Thy obedience shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee."

The man or husband is the symbol of the intellect, as woman is of the will or affection. In true order the intellect is subordinate to the will. It is love for the Lord which renders the truths of the Lord clear. It is the love of the neighbor which teaches all life's proper duties. But another result of the curse is, that the will yields obedience to the intellect. And now in spiritual things we must retrace our steps. Now the intellect must acknowledge the Lord, before the heart will love Him; the

reason must admit an act to be a duty, before we are willing to do it. It is the only way back to Eden.

“And unto Adam he said.” This is the authorized version, but a mistranslation. It should read, “Unto the man (*Ish*—the man male) he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto thy wife;” because thou, the once God-like intellect, hast listened to the suggestions of the *proprium*, “and hast eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee saying, Thou shalt not eat of it,” that is, hast drawn the nourishment of thy soul from self and sense and science—“cursed is the ground for thy sake”—miserable and wretched and degraded is thy mind; “in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;” that is, with trouble and affliction, vexation and disappointment, sin and sorrow shalt thou pursue thy way, as the legitimate result of thy selfish life, so long as that state endures; “thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee;” that is, evils and falsities shall be the fruits of thy mental condition; “and thou shalt eat of the herb of the field,”—the smallest and least consequential of spiritual conception shall be thy mental food; “in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return to the ground;” that is, with disgust and loathing shalt thou receive the true bread of life offered thee by the Lord, until finally thou shalt fall back completely into thine earthly nature;

“for out of it thou wast taken,”—out of the earthly nature the Lord lifted thee when He placed thee in Eden; “for dust thou art,”—in and of thyself mere spiritual dross; “and to dust thou shalt return,”—by thine own act hast thou abased thyself, and art, therefore, self-condemned.

And so the woman, the man and the serpent—the affection, the intellect and the sensual nature—all passed under the curse. Yet it was, on the part of the human race, an act of self-degradation. The Lord seems to say, “I did it;” but it was not the Lord’s will, but his broken law that did it. And so mankind went down, down, until our God-in-Christ came to earth to raise him up again.

Now the lesson here taught comes home to all of us. The curse is evil and sin, and it rests upon the hearts of all who cherish evil. It is self and sense, and it abides in every nature over which these twin deceivers hold sway. The woman and the man and the serpent are all in us. They are of every mind. Each one has his emotional, his intellectual and his sensual nature. In the Eden state, these are under the Divine influence; in a fallen or perverted state, they are under the curse. All human degradation is self-imposed; each curse that falls is self-originated. But the Lord comes down (if we will permit Him) into the midst of every sorrow, care or pain, and breathes his mercy there. The good Samaritan of the soul, He pours

his oil of love into every wound. He turns, or constantly endeavors to turn, each sorrow into a balm for our healing, each pain into a cure for our hurts. And if we accept his mercy and his love, we rise and walk erect once more.

Shall we not take comfort, then, amid the saddest of life's pictures? Shall we not receive solace even when contemplating the ruins of fallen man? We have looked down; let us now look up and rejoice in the thought, that even so low as the human race has fallen, so high may it also rise.

10





VII.

THE EXPULSION.

And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil : and now lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever : therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man.—Gen. iii. 22, 23.

THE expulsion from Eden, viewed in its mere surface sense, appears to have been a very arbitrary proceeding on the part of the Lord. Its cause seems to have been wholly inadequate, its consequences not legitimately growing out of the act, and the punishment out of all proportion to the crime.

Let us take a supposed case. A father places his child in a garden where there are two kinds of fruit, each of them tempting to the eye and giving outward evidence of being luscious to the taste. The child is informed—without a why or a wherefore, but on the impulse of a mere whim and as a test of his implicit obedience—that he may eat of the one kind of fruit and not of the other. The declared conditions or consequences are : if he obeys he shall live, if not he shall die. It is a severe test, and the punishment altogether dispro-

portionate to the offence to which it is annexed. The child, weak and ignorant, overcome by curiosity and overpersuaded by foolish advisers, is led to believe that his father did not really mean what he said, and eats of the tree of which he is forbidden to eat. Then the parent, entirely forgetful of the penalty he had imposed for disobedience, does not cause the child to die, but banishes him from his presence forever, to get his education and his living as best he may. He is to receive no more love, no more sympathy, no sign or shadow of mercy, from him who too severely tested him, and who was bound by every human consideration to lead him with a loving hand into wiser ways, instead of casting him off in his weakness, ignorance and error.

What would we think of such a father? Would we not consider him unjust, inhuman, heartless? Even the law which is supposed to be devoid of sympathy and untempered by mercy, would compel the parent to step in and take his child in charge again. But the Lord is better than man, infinitely more kind, tender and loving. Would it be possible for Him to act toward his child in the way the letter of Genesis appears to teach? How could He who, in the tender language of the Psalmist, is described as "a God full of compassion and gracious, long-suffering and plenteous in mercy and truth," who is represented in the

Gospel as being "kind even unto the unthankful and the evil"—how could He be unjust, arbitrary, or cruel, devoid of love or forgetful of mercy toward even the most rebellious of his children?

When, therefore, we so read or interpret this narrative, accepting the apparent for the real truth, we make a terrible mistake. We must not conclude with the infidel that God's Word is false. Rather let us conclude that we have been mistaken in our interpretation; that our education or understanding has been at fault; and let us seek for an interpretation that will justify the character of God, and in so doing elevate our own minds. In reading the written Word we shall always come nearer the truth by rejecting the natural and seeking the spiritual meaning. For to all utterances of divine inspiration, our Lord's words apply, "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." And the apostle spoke in harmony with the Master's words, when he said with reference to Scripture, "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life."

We have come now to a point where we can clearly see this. In previous discourses we have treated this Eden history as an allegory of spiritual truth. We have looked beyond the letter; we have not impaired the beauty or force of the narrative by literal interpretations, but have tried to

reproduce its inward spirit and fill it with vigorous life. We have not looked upon it as literal history, but have endeavored to quicken it with that spirit with which the Lord gave it forth. Contrast the spiritual truth thus taught in this history viewed as a parable, with the most unnatural ideas which have been drawn from it as a literal historic narrative. An all-wise Father has created an earth upon which He places the family of man. He has made these children of his, on a finite scale, an image and likeness of what He is infinitely. That is, He has made them beings of love, innocence and goodness, and capable of indefinite degrees of spiritual wisdom. It is his desire that they should pass from this world, prepared for angelic habitations, and live in the highest happiness forever. He, therefore, may be considered as speaking to mankind after this manner: You are human because you are free; and you are free moral agents because you are human. I cannot take away your freedom without reducing you to the grade of the beasts which perish. Now, I place before you heavenly food of every variety, the wisdom of a good life and the goodness of eternal wisdom; and partaking of the fruit of these, you will have eternal life. I am the source of all good. Draw your nourishment, your food for heart and mind, from me the great Tree of Life, and existence shall be to you exceeding

blissful. Do this, and life is an Eden, a garden of joy to you; and Eden is the bliss of heavenly life. But I place before you also the fact, that the life of self and sense is misery, degradation and spiritual death. This is the forbidden tree. It is forbidden, not because I would deprive you of any true good or pleasure, but because this is evil and insanity and there is no good in it. I commend the heavenly fruit to you, because it nourishes the eternal life of your souls and places you in heaven forever. I forbid the fruit of self and sense, because it hinders your spiritual growth, makes you heirs of spiritual death, and unfits you for heaven.

The contrast between this view of the narrative which is its spirit, and the other which is its letter, is marked. The Father is no longer arbitrary or inhuman. He is tenderness exemplified. All is consonant with what our deepest readings of the Bible show his character to be. It is not the Lord who is tyrannical, but man who is willful; not the Lord in anger shutting man out from happiness, but man shutting himself out by his own willfulness. And all this, as we have seen, is told, and in no ambiguous manner, in the symbolic language of this ancient parable.

But it is said: "Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden;" and, it is added: "So he drove out the man." This is the peculiar

style of all divine writings. It is so given with a purpose. Some of the common expressions of our day are similarly fashioned and for the same purpose. The old sayings "The sun rises," and "The sun goes down," are familiar illustrations. These phrases have come down to us from a people whose system of astronomy was all false, and who believed that the sun literally moved around the earth in twenty-four hours; that at the end of each day it sunk below the horizon; and that at the end of each night it rose again on the eastern side. That is the appearance, but it is not the reality. We all now know that the earth revolves upon its own axis in the twenty-four hours, and turns us in its movement toward and away from the sun. Yet this language of appearance, in this and many other instances that might be mentioned, remains unchallenged. Children and ignorant people are permitted to use it with a mistaken idea attaching to it, because they could not understand the truth if explained to them. But the educated are in no wise deceived or misled thereby, using themselves the same expressions, with a full conception of the true doctrine which lies within or behind this language of appearance; and the same children who, as children, accepted the apparent for the genuine truth, slowly and unconsciously, through education, come at last to connect only the real truth

with the same language. The language of appearance, so large an element in the formulated expressions of conversation, is adapted to children and adults, to the ignorant and wise. It is the highest conception, fallacious as it may be, of infantile innocence and ignorance; yet it is, to manhood and education, only the apparent form which clothes realities.

The Lord, in his dealings with men, follows what is sometimes termed the methods of nature. And what are the methods of nature but the Lord's own methods? The Bible was given to the Jews who were merely natural men incapable of spiritual ideas. It is read to-day by millions of merely natural men. It is and has been and will forever be read by countless generations of children. It is intended that the natural minded, the superstitious, the spiritually uneducated and children, shall abide in the appearance until they can accept the reality. It is better for them to believe that the Lord chastises, that He is angry with us when we do wrong, that He sends us to hell, that He deprives us of heaven, that He drives the disobedient out of Eden, than that they should not recognize Him at all. The appearance of truth in regard to God, is better than a denial of Him. An acknowledgment of Him in an erroneous way, is better than no acknowledgment. We ascend to the temple of wisdom by steps; and

the lowest step, be it never so rugged or soiled by earthly dust, is a foothold by means of which we mount to the higher.

Our Lord recognizes this. Therefore the Bible is a series of parables replete with spiritual wisdom. Its seeming is for natural men and children. Its real spirit is for spiritual men and women, and those desiring to be spiritual. The child may say, "God punishes me if I am wicked;" the natural man may think that the Lord drives men out of Eden for their disobedience; but the higher thought sees in the phrase, "The Lord drove out the man," simply an expression of the consequences which inhere in his own act. Eden was innocence, love and true happiness. When man ceased to love, he was out of Eden; when he was no longer innocent, he was no longer in Eden; when he did not enjoy the love of the Lord, nor the purity of purpose, nor the peculiar happiness which constituted Eden, and of which the term itself was a synonym, then he left Eden. That is to say, as Eden is a state and not a place, his departure from that state, by the very act of departure, put him outside of the garden.

The natural sense reveals the Lord to natural men as the punisher of disobedience. The spiritual sense manifests, to those who think spiritually, the great law of the fall, as being in man's own

departure from the true and good. • Therefore the Lord drove out the man in the same sense that the sun sends darkness on the world. For as the earth rolls itself away from the sunlight and plunges us into darkness, so the mind turns itself away from the Lord and his influence, and in so doing goes forth from Eden. Thus was it, and thus only, that Adam or the world's first Church, and Eve or the selfhood to which that Church had become wedded, were driven from the garden. They went to no other natural place, they remained, as to natural locality, just where they were. But they fell or went into a lower state, a more and more sensual and selfish state, a state to which nothing celestial adhered, and which could not in any proper sense be called Eden ; and in that state they remained.

Let us now glance at another law of Providence which is set forth under the correspondences in the parable. It seems strange to natural thought, that the reason given for man's being sent forth from the Garden of Eden was, "lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever." Was it not the very purpose of the Lord that he should eat of this sacred tree ? Why then send him from the garden lest he should eat of it ? The answer is found in the symbols already so often explained.

Eden is a state of love ; a garden, a state of

spiritual intelligence. The expression, Garden of Eden, is, however, used with a modified meaning according to the position in the parable in which it occurs. The primitive state of man was such, that his Garden of Eden was a spiritual intelligence evolved from his intense love of God. But when he fell from this high state, and became in love with self and the things of sense, he still retained much of his knowledge, yea, acknowledgment of spiritual things. So his Garden of Eden would now be an intelligence concerning spiritual things based upon what had been handed down from his forefathers, a tradition concerning the love state, but not an experience of it. For we must remember that we are tracing the spiritual fall of a race through its centuries of decadence. The present generation had much more of an intellectual assent than of an experimental knowledge of the wisdom of Eden.

But as we learn from various other portions of the Word, to acknowledge truth, and not to be in the effort to live in the light of the truth acknowledged, is profanation. It is more soul-destroying than any other state. To give a formal assent to spiritual truth without an inward acknowledgment, to have a parrot-like memory of phrases without an adequate conception of their meaning, and in neither case to live by them, is comparatively pardonable: no one can live up to what he

does not intelligently comprehend. But to receive God's law intelligently, and deliberately break it—to accept in the understanding the law of love, and make no effort to bring it forth into life—demoralizes the soul and is spiritually ruinous. Better ignorance, better utter darkness, better anything that sins in blindness and perverts the Lord's law with no knowledge of its existence, than an intelligent conception of its behests and a willful violation of them. By a willful violation, I do not mean the slips which the carnal man is always liable to make, but the deliberate sinning from the pure love of sin, and without an effort to overcome, while the man interiorly acknowledges the true nature of the higher life.

Therefore it was according to the Lord's providence that man should entirely lose his intelligence concerning spiritual things, rather than acknowledge and profane them; that he should not only go forth from Eden, or the love state, since so he would, but that he should also be driven out from the garden—the spiritually intelligent state. The hand is a symbol of power, as it is man's chief agent in performing the behests of his will. To put forth the hand, here means to exert the intellectual powers of the mind. To take of the tree of life, is to acknowledge the doctrine of love, and the Lord as its source. To eat is mentally to digest and confirm it. And to live forever, is to

live hereafter and to all eternity the life of the *proprium*, which is that of spiritual death. For while to live refers to heavenly life when that is the subject treated of, it means infernal life, when the soul is driven forth from Eden.

Thus when the Lord said, "Behold the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil;" that is, when He, in his infinite knowledge, perceived that mankind had eaten of the forbidden fruit, and yet had retained their acknowledgment of the laws of heavenly life approved of the Lord and held by his angels (it is plural, "one of us"), then came into play one of the eternal provisions of Providence. That provision is, that when the human mind falls into spiritual degradation, it shall lose its power of seeing or understanding spiritual truth. To profane is to sink into the lowest depths of evil; to sin without profanation of the truth, is comparatively pardonable. This is in consonance with that teaching of our Lord, which says: "That servant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes." For the merciful Lord, rather than have willful disobedience, has so ordered the laws of mind, that the supreme love of self shall be attended by loss of the capacity to recognize the love

of God; and that a purely sensuous life shall incapacitate one to perceive the light of heaven. We see the operations of this law all the world over. And now that man has gone forth from Eden, none are permitted to see the light except those who will endeavor to live by the light. In our present low condition we may fail to live in all respects as the truth requires. But this is not the unpardonable sin. If we want to get into the sunlight of the Lord, and to rise above our evils, knowledge is given us adapted to our states; and the wanting and seeking is a sign that at some time we shall gain what we desire.

So, as the Eden of love faded from the hearts of men, the light of spiritual intelligence flickered in its departing struggle, and at last went out. Then the garden state was gone. And forth from the garden of Eden—forth from love and even spiritual knowledge—our early progenitors went. They went forth to “till the ground”—to cultivate the lowest part of their nature; “to till the ground from whence they were taken,” to cultivate the sensuous plane on which the race was originally born, but from which untainted as yet by hereditary evil, the Lord had raised them into Eden.

But the Spirit of the Lord is ever operating for the salvation of man. There is no state of the heart into which it may not enter if man will per-

mit it. To him who looks to the Lord, the light again comes. The more he looks to the Lord, the larger will become his intelligence. But the full comprehension of divine truths, the living perception which renders them certain and gives us an unquestioning possession of them, lies in the love and life of them.

It is well for us to think of this portion of Scripture as something more, even in its symbols, than a historical description of the first dwellers on earth. We lose the best part of it, unless we take it all home. We have hearts and understandings as well as they of old. We have our Eden, our tree of life, our forbidden fruit, as well as they. We, too, incline to self and are tempted to our fall. Our Eden, however, is our infancy. Then the best of the Lord's angels are around and near us, and we are guileless, pure and innocent. It is a different condition from that of the most ancient Church; still it is our Eden. As we grow older we incline to self. The hereditary proclivity is strong, and we lean to our corrupt inheritance. We incline to be wedded more and more to the *proprium* or selfhood, and take to ourselves some Eve of selfish affection in a thousand different ways. The serpent comes to us, and we listen to his subtle arguments, and yield our reason to his seductive allurements. The history of all hearts is substantially the same.

Manhood or womanhood finds us infatuated with the serpent. We are driven out of Eden. Yet there is this to console us, that so long as we live on earth we are privileged to return.

It is for the purpose of reading our own heart-histories, that these parables are valuable. For that, they are of inestimable worth; but they are valueless to us in the degree they fail of that. For in these chapters, whatever they may tell of the olden times, our hearts are also laid bare for our own inspection. When we read them for spiritual instruction, angels quicken us to love them. They infuse the desire to shun the wrong and do the right. Thus we come into communion with angelic minds; we breathe in some degree the atmosphere of heaven; we fall in some measure under the influence thus infused; we grow better and wiser; we gain more light and life; and this divine Word shall do more for us, as we better comprehend its spirit and meaning, than men in the past have, in their most hopeful states, dreamed of. If we love this Word, let us not imagine that we may safely be indifferent to its higher purpose. If we reverence it, let us not be content with its lower or sensuous meaning. If we have caught one glimpse of its heavenly spirit, let us take it to our hearts and fill our souls with its delights, and in its every utterance try—as we are trying in this history of the planting and loss of Eden—to read

therein of our own changes and chances, and to gain therein the help of the Lord and his angels, to arise like the prodigal and return to the soul's true home—the garden of the Lord.

11 *





VIII.

THE FLAMING SWORD.

And he placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.—Gen. iii. 24.

THERE is no grander subject of contemplation than that of the providence of God. People are not indisposed, on great and extraordinary occasions, especially when they have been mysteriously saved from sudden disaster, to admit the existence of a supreme Power turning away evil from their path. But that is a very limited view of an illimitable subject. The grandeur of the Lord's providence lies in its universality. When we think of it as special in the sense of being uncommon, we limit its operations. Under such circumstances there is always mingled with our acknowledgment of the Lord's goodness, too much of the feeling that we have been singled out to receive a peculiar token of his favor. Awe and egoism are mingled in proportions too nearly equal, to render the sentiment one of the highest type of spirituality. It is not always easy to separate the feeling of pride in being specially favored of God, from that resulting from a humble recognition of his protecting hand. That we believe

ourselves to be humble does not alter the case. The mind under the control of human weakness, may deem itself humble when the Lord knows it is proud ; and this, because of the fact which too few recognize, that the heart may be proud of its own humility. Herein lies the danger of a belief in special providences of which we imagine that we have been the favored recipients more than others.

But when we contemplate the Lord's providence as universal in its character, this danger ceases. The first view is narrow ; this is as broad as the universe itself. The first brings within its purview the self-conscious principle ; this loses sight of one's self, except as a mere drop in the ocean of humanity. Under its influence the mind says : The infinite Father loves the whole universe of men as well as He does me. The care that I receive, every one receives. The eye that was watching my way in saving me from disaster, is no less watchful over the goings of each individual among the countless myriads of the universe. The mercy which hovers over me, is immanent in all the wide domain of human life, everywhere operative, everywhere alike tender and loving.

In this thought there is genuine humility. I thus become only one of a vast brotherhood. No matter what happens to me, I am neither a pecu-

liarily favored nor neglected one. Therefore, whether we live on this side of the great ocean or the other, whether on the earth or on one of the other planets, whether in this solar system or in any other of the myriads which dot the starry heavens, we are all momentarily watched over, guided and guarded by the omnipresent All-Father.

True, we cannot comprehend infinity ; that is, we cannot fully comprehend how the knowledge of the Lord can embrace things so minute, or his presence extend so far. This is one of the subjects which is beyond our mental grasp. The child fails to comprehend many things which, as a man, he sees quickly and clearly. We are unable while in the flesh, to see the why of many things which, in the other world, will be simple and plain to us. One of the great delights of men who become angels, will be the constant broadening of their mental horizon, and the ever-enlarging power of their mental grasp.

We shall get nearer to this question of how the Lord can supervise the most minute affairs, only as our spiritual understanding develops and our experiences multiply. If we never come into it fully, it will be because we are not gods, and none but the Divine can fully comprehend the infinite operations of the Supreme Mind. Yet we can feel its influence ; we can know its truth ; we can

recognize the laws of Providence; and we can grow beneath their invigorating presence. The sun shines upon us and warms and enlightens us none the less, although we may not be able to analyze his substance, and have no knowledge of how his beams are conveyed to us through such immense space. So the Lord loves us all, sees us all, and is present in every least act of our lives, although we cannot, with our finite minds, fully grasp the idea of the possibility of the infinite operations of his providence.

Little as is the universality of the Lord's presence and providence recognized among men, it is one of the most positively announced teachings of Scripture. The Psalmist declares it in the words, "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me and thy right hand shall hold me" (Ps. vii. 7, 8, 9). Jeremiah proclaims it in the divine interrogation, "Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord" (xxiii. 24). And our Lord, when on earth, reiterated the same truth in the declaration: "Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not

one of them is forgotten before God? But even the very hairs of our head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows" (Luke xii. 6, 7). The five sparrows worth only two farthings, are very small things for the Lord to remember. The hairs of the head are very small things to be counted by God. But if even these are under his immediate observation, surely man must be. This was a doctrine that no follower of Christ must deny. So He referred them to the birds of the air, which sow not, neither reap nor gather into barns. He pointed to the lilies of the field, which neither toil nor spin. Yet the birds are bountifully fed, and the lilies are beautifully clothed, by Him who is the Father of all. Since each lily and bird, in each moment of its little life, is watched so carefully by the Lord's providence, who shall say that the least of men, in the least act or event of his life, is forgotten by Him?

Such is the divine truth. And the Christian who does not recognize this divine care in each and every least affair of each and every human life, is not penetrated by the philosophy of Jesus. And the Christian who does not know that this doctrine is universally recognized in Scripture as a central truth, has scarcely taken his first lesson in the teachings of Christ or his religion. •

Now when the early race of mankind, called Adam, had departed from the state of purity, love, intelligence and happiness, denominated the Garden of Eden; when, by becoming sensual and selfish they had lost or been driven out of that glorious state of which Eden was the symbol and synonym; then the providence of God, ever merciful and loving—the same providence which maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good alike, and sendeth his rain equally on the just and on the unjust, followed them out of Eden and into banishment.

Providence is not only in heaven; it is also in hell. It not only gives good to the good, but it restrains the evil from evil. It has no resentments, no wounded pride, no human passion. It works for all men, and for their greatest good and happiness. In Eden or out, it will do for each one that which will make him the best and happiest man it is possible for him to be on his own chosen plane. In Eden its ministries are ineffably tender and sweet. Out of Eden they do not seem so, only because they flow into perverted hearts and minds. Yet, even there, it will so modify and control circumstances, not infringing human freedom, as to lead man to be as good as he is willing to be, and to withhold him as far as possible from sinking into lower depths of iniquity.

This providence of the Lord is represented by

the cherubim. The cherubim, as known in ancient symbolism, were figures with human faces, outspread wings, and bodies either animal or human. They are nowhere specifically described in Scripture, so that their exact form is matter of speculation. But the figures exhibited for cherubim in the pictures of the old masters—infant faces with wings attached—find no warrant in the Bible. From what is there said, we know, at least, that they were perfect though mingled figures; and that so far from being ludicrous, as tradition would make them, they were sublime in conception and beautiful in form. The cherubim are frequently mentioned in holy Writ, never, however, as a race of supernatural beings, as has sometimes been imagined, but always as symbols.

To mention but a single instance. It was commanded that cherubim should be placed on the mercy seat over the ark, over the curtains of the tabernacle, over the vail and also in the temple, to signify that the Lord had them all in his keeping; that He watched over them continually; that in all the wanderings and wars of Israel, wherever they went and wherever they stayed, his unwearied charge over them never relaxed.

But all these things—the ark which contained the Ten Commandments, the mercy seat upon which the cherubim stood, the curtains, the vail, the tabernacle and temple themselves, mere forms

and containants, as they were, of outward worship—were symbolic of the various things of internal and spiritual worship yet to be developed in the Christian Church.

But Christian worship in its highest sense is Christian life. Thus the sublime truth was figured forth in these as representatives, that the providence of the Lord broods, as it were, with beaming countenance and watchful eyes and outstretched wings, over every human life and heart, in all its worship, ways and wanderings. The face of the cherub was representative of the Lord's love and circumspection ; the body, of his power and presence ; the outstretched wings, of his having them, after the beautiful similitude of the birds with their young, under his overshadowing and tender care ; its standing on the mercy seat, the constant presence of the Lord in all human affairs with infinite compassion, gentleness and love.

As, therefore, the cherubim are referred to in all other portions of the Word as symbolic forms only, and not as supernatural beings, so must it have been in Genesis. In the description of the tabernacle and temple with their furniture and worship, we have an account of things actually made and once historically existent. The cherubim were beautifully carved figures placed in the positions to which they were assigned by divine command as representative of spiritual things.

But in the narrative of Eden we have pure allegory, with little if any historical basis of literal fact. Yet the cherubim here have the same meaning. Their insertion into the divine allegory was for the purpose of shadowing forth the doctrine of an immediate and universal Providence. It was not intended to indicate that any particular race of supernatural beings were detailed, like the picket guards of an army, to protect the natural spot where stood the sacred tree of life. But it was designed to convey the lesson of an ever-watchful Providence. It teaches it on the same principle and after the same manner as did the outspread wings and heavenly countenance which covered over and looked down upon the ark of the covenant. It kept the way of the tree of life by preventing the vicious, the sensual, and the selfish from understanding the doctrine of love, from appreciating the wisdom of a holy life, and from knowing the exquisite nature of Eden's happiness; lest, understanding, appreciating and knowing, they should profane them, and thereby seal for themselves a yet more bitter doom.

And the cherubim still guard the tree of life. It is the same to-day, and so will always be. The profane cannot see God; the earthly have no relish for heavenly joy; the intensely selfish do not believe in disinterestedness; the grossly impure contend that purity of heart does not exist;

the sensual admit not for a moment any wisdom that lifts one's view above the senses. The materialist is chained to matter; the heathen acknowledges no Christ; the idolater is joined to his idols. Brutalism and barbarism have no idea what spirituality means; if they make pretence of being converted, they accept the name of Christianity only, but do not get the real thing. The Lord's providence allows no man to receive more or higher truth than he is prepared to live. We wonder at the slow progress of the nations from heathenism to Christianity; it is the cherubim guarding the way of the tree of life. We wonder that so few accept the higher views of Christianity revealed by the Lord through Swedenborg; again it is the cherubim guarding the way of the tree of life. The heathen will be converted to Christianity, and Christians will accept more spiritual views of our religion, as they are seen in the Lord's providence to be ready, at least, to try to enter into its spirit and life.

But the cherubim, or Providence and its ministries, will hasten slowly in spite of the unrest of man. The tree of life will be guarded from profanation for men's own benefit, until they can safely take of it, and eat of its fruit without danger of profanation. And though we may be nominal Christians, or nominal receivers of the higher views of Christian truth, lip-service is not

necessarily heart-service, nor is outward profession always accompanied by inward perception. And with lips overflowing with creeds, and memories stored with formulated statements of the highest truths, men may still imagine themselves to be eating of the tree of life, while the cherubim stand, with mercy and love, between them and this sacred tree, lest really partaking of its fruit they should profane.

For the purpose of the allegory, a more strictly literal rendering of the Hebrew text is preferable to that of the authorized version. A high authority renders it thus: "And he [the Lord] made cherubim from the east to dwell at the Garden of Eden, and the flame of a sword turning itself to keep the way of the tree of life." The east is the symbol of the peculiar dwelling-place of the Lord, thus of the Lord himself. What is from the east is from the Lord; what is in the east is spiritually near to the Lord. He who faces the east, faces the Lord; that is, in his heart he looks to the Lord. So the Lord made cherubim from the east, that is, a providence which is peculiarly his own or from Himself, to dwell, or be perpetually operative, at the entrance of the Eden of the heart, to keep the way of the tree of life, and preserve it from profanation.

But there was another provision of Providence to this end, expressed in the correspondential

language of the text. There was, to use the more exact version above given, "the flame of a sword turning itself, to keep the way of the tree of life." Had this been a literal garden and its sacred tree a literal tree, one would imagine that its obliteration from the earth were sufficient without literal guards or the flame of a literal sword. But as Eden is the state of celestial love and intelligence, and the tree of life, the Lord as their source and supply, spiritual provision is needed to keep from its sacred precincts the sensual and profane until they are prepared to partake of its fruit without profaning. Everywhere in the Word of the Lord, the burning lusts of unregenerate hearts are likened to fire and flame. The flames of hell are but the blazing fires of self-love, of passion and pride, enmity and envy, gluttony and debauchery, whatever burns in infernal breasts. Whatever is of self or self-derived intelligence, flames up as from a furnace of lust within the heart, whenever it is stirred into activity.

The sword, in the symbolism of the Word, is used to denote the divine truth, which, keen-edged and polished in the hands of him who knows how to wield it, cuts its way through error and delusion, and destroys, in its victorious progress, the sophistries of sensuous reason and the armies of infernal persuasions. But in its opposite sense it is the symbol of falsity warring

against truth and good. This is its meaning here. The flame of a sword turning itself, is self-love blazing forth with its false persuasions, and turning every way for strength and confirmation. For when self-love with its attending satellites, evils of every kind, once finds permanent lodging within the heart, it soon persuades that heart that all is right. It turns in every direction or to every method of reasoning, to confirm the man in his chosen position. No falsity is too false for its purpose ; no turning from truth can turn too far to accomplish its end ; and no rankling lust of self-love can flame too high or burn too brightly to gratify its passion.

Now self-love flaming with false persuasions, is used by Providence as one of the most efficient guards to keep the way of the tree of life. The object sought is, that wicked minds shall not interiorly comprehend the life and love of God. This is for two reasons : One, as we have shown, is, that to interiorly comprehend and yet to live in willful disobedience, is profanation—the one unpardonable sin. The sin is unpardonable, however, not through lack of mercy in the Lord, but through its so searing the soul as to leave it in spiritual ruin. The other is, that a confirmed love of evil, with a knowledge of the full measure of happiness lost, would, to the spirit who has sunk beyond recovery, be everlasting misery.

Now hell exists because men have chosen wickedness; yet there is mercy there. God is mercy itself, and He descends not into hell with inverted nature. Where there is no reform there is no endless torture. But an appreciation of heavenly joy and an eternal knowledge of an everlasting loss of bliss like this, would be unceasing pain. A conscience forever torturing itself over what might have been, having a constant and realizing conviction of its loss, would be unremitting agony. A devil is a devil because he has lost his appreciation of love, of heaven and of heavenly bliss;—because his conscience is blasted through willful and continual sin.

So the flame of the sword turning itself in the heart, self-love and sensualism flaming with false persuasions, keeps man back from reaching for the tree of life and profaning its fruit; and this, because self-love does not appreciate the tree of life, deeming the fruit of the forbidden tree in all respects infinitely superior to it. It is only as self-love ceases to be itself, and that the love of God and good takes its place, that the joy of Eden and heaven is seen and sought. But after death, when conscience is lost and evil is become the rooted love of the soul, the happiness of heaven is a thing impossible to be known; and if approached it is felt as something repulsive and painful.

So no devil could seek to enter the Eden of the

other world either to disturb its inhabitants or profane its life, because self-love turns him instinctively away. He is happier elsewhere. It is, from a heavenly point of view, a wretched kind of happiness; nevertheless it is his, and the merciful Lord would keep all as happy as He can. So the flame of the sword which turns itself, is made to keep the way of the tree of life. So Providence protects man's Eden everywhere, and the very best is done for all.

Such is the lesson of the text. It teaches a doctrine that justifies the ways of God with man. He is infinite mercy and love in all his appointments and doings. He is tender with the meanest human being that forfeits the sublime destiny for which he was created. He is always with us all. He goes with us everywhere. He sympathizes with every noble aspiration and heroic struggle. He tries to turn our errors into wise and useful lessons. If we sink into self, He follows us with healing balms for every wound. If we sink beyond recall, He softens even the saddest fall. If we rise toward heaven, He bears us up with tender hands. If we throw ourselves into his loving arms, He will hold us there forever. The cherubim spread their broad protecting wings over all, and even the flame of the turning sword has its lesson of love.



IX.

THE RESTORATION.

And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. . . . Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.—Rev. xxii. 1, 2, 14.

AS the Word of God, in recording the spiritual history of man, begins by placing him in the Garden of Eden, so it ends by restoring him to that beautiful dwelling-place from whence, through sin, he was driven. Eden is the first blessing and the last promise which the Lord offers to man. It is the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end, of the divine alphabet of human holiness. It embraces all things delightful and pleasant, all things wise and true, all things loving and good, all things innocent and pure. But as the Lord looks especially to man's eternal good and not to his temporal success—to that other world which is spiritual and whose joys are unending, and not to this which

is natural and whose pleasures are transient—it is evident that the blessings which Eden comprises must be of a spiritual and not of a worldly character. This realm is no Mohammedan paradise of beautiful houris, delicious perfumes, voluptuous music, and other sensual delights. It is that generous, pure and holy state of the soul which rests in the Lord, which takes home to the heart the spiritual life that He has taught, and which finds its chief pleasure and delight in doing good.

We fully understand, now, that Eden is a state of the soul and not a natural locality. Were it not so, we could not approach the closing chapter of Scripture with any just appreciation of its meaning. Like the great I AM who is the only God, and yet is called by many names, Jehovah, Jesus, Christ or Lord, Adonai or Immanuel, so, in a large sense, there is only one spiritual home for man, although it is referred to or spoken of in Scripture under many names. In Isaiah it is called Hephzibah, the Lord's delight, and also Beulah, the married land. In many places it is called Jerusalem, sometimes Zion; Jesus preached it as the kingdom of heaven; John described it as the holy city, New Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God. But it is introduced in the early chapters of Genesis as the Garden of Eden.

Now all these expressions are typical of a spiritual state of the Church or of man. True, Zion

and Jerusalem were literal localities ; but they are used as the symbols of interior states of purity, wisdom and love. The restoration of Zion and Jerusalem so often described under glowing imagery, is but the restoration of Eden under another name. It is not natural cities in their pride of numbers and outward glory concerning which the Lord is solicitous, so much as it is a spiritual state of his Church. The kingdom of heaven which Jesus preached, and into whose courts He invited his followers, was only Eden again under another name. It was a thing of the heart, and He so distinctly stated. "Neither," said He, "shall ye say, Lo, here ! or Lo, there ! for behold, the kingdom of God is within you." Charts could not place it nor geographies describe it, for it was of the spirit. And, given this kingdom of heaven fully established in the minds and hearts of men, then was the whole prophecy fulfilled, the kingdom restored to Israel, the glory to Zion, and Jerusalem rebuilt ; and this, though the children of Israel according to the flesh, were dispersed to the uttermost parts of the earth, the natural Jerusalem a heap of ruins, and the literal Zion razed to its foundations.

It is even so with the Holy City, New Jerusalem, which was to descend out of heaven from God. As heaven in the Scriptural view is a spiritual realm, whatever descends from thence must

be spiritual in its character. It is not visible to outward sight; it comes to us within. And the New Jerusalem is but another term for Eden. It is a new dispensation of light and love. It is the doctrine of Eden retaught and the life of Eden restored. If we cannot see this by intuition, there is one fact which shows it clearly; it is that the peculiarities of Eden reappear in the New Jerusalem. When John in vision looked up, he saw a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. Natural rivers do not proceed from visible thrones; they well up from hidden fountains in the earth. This, therefore, is the same river under a different name, which went forth in Eden. It is the same water of which our Lord spake when He said to the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well: "Whosoever shall drink of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." That was the new truth of the Gospel which, inwardly received, would be a well of spiritual wisdom that would so turn the current of the thoughts, affections and desires, as to prove a fount of everlasting life to whomsoever should drink it.

Such is the water that comes from above. It is spiritual truth. Such was the water that flowed from Eden. Such is that which in the New

Jerusalem descends out of heaven from God. Can we have any truth which is not his? Can we have any enlightenment except from Him? The river of spiritual wisdom, in its refreshing of the understanding and its quickening of the life, flows always from Him. It is the river of Eden, the water of life, whose fountain-head is the throne of God and the Lamb. It flows to mind and heart; and it gives to him who receives it the power to live an intelligently holy life, and to perform the duties of existence not only in a rational way, but in the spirit and faith of Him in whose name it is done. This living water is "clear as crystal." There is nothing so clear to the receptive mind as spiritual truth. The natural mind does not think so; but that does not alter the fact. The sun is not clearer in its shining, than the apprehension of divine truth by the spiritually awakened intellect. But as the faculties suited to the apprehension of mathematics, or music, or poetry, must be aroused before their higher truths become clear or cognizable, so must it be with truths of spiritual wisdom. Without the proper quickening of the spiritual faculties, these truths will remain obscure or altogether unseen; with it, they will be pellucid as the mountain spring; clear as transparent crystal.

But in the Holy City was to be reproduced another feature of the Garden of Eden, and a

central one. "In the midst of the street of it and of the river, on this side and on that, was the tree of life." I give the literal rendering of the original Greek, as preferable to the authorized version. This tree of life fixes the New Jerusalem as Eden restored. There is but one tree of life. It grew in the midst of the ancient garden, and it will grow again, not only in the midst of the street of the New Jerusalem, but in the midst of its river and on this side and on that. And the promise had already been recorded, "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God" (Rev. ii. 7). It is not which *was* in the midst of paradise, nor which will be there, but which *is*. The tree of life is of perennial growth. It always is; it always was; it always will be. It grows ever ready for the acceptance of man. The gates of paradise are perpetually open for the entrance of all, and the sacred tree forever stands laden with fruit for the sustenance of every hungry soul. But the profane cannot see it, and they think it does not exist. For them it does not; for the wise and intelligent it does.

Paradise is the kingdom of heaven. Call it by what name the Scripture may, Eden or the New Jerusalem, the tree of life grows in the midst of it; and without that tree, it is not paradise at all. For the tree of life, as we have often said

and shown, is the Lord as the central love and life of the soul. Now, having this and partaking of the fruit of this tree, man is in Eden, in the kingdom of heaven, in the New Jerusalem, no matter what the age of the world or where his dwelling place may be.

Yet these expressions, though synonymous in a general sense, in a specific sense, especially as prophetic of different ages of the Church, have a somewhat different meaning. Eden refers, in a strict sense, to that state of innocent perfection of life which was characteristic of the most ancient Church. It was, in its goodness and wisdom, of that peculiarly infantile or tender genius, which is past and gone and which can never on earth be exactly reproduced. The New Jerusalem is more properly that state of heavenly perfection in the Church at large, or in the individual heart, which has been attained through severe conflict with evil in emerging from the baptism of hell. It will be compatible with the knowledge and possession of natural science, art and luxury, to which those primitive people were strangers. It will, therefore, have a broader basis of natural knowledge. The two are similar states, but developed under different circumstances. This truth is alluded to for the purpose of taking note of the fact, that when different expressions are used in Scripture for a similar idea, though they mean the same

thing, they mean it under different phases. Thus while the New Jerusalem is a restoration of Eden, it will be of a different genius from the ancient Eden, because the people of whom it is to be composed will be of a different character, though of equal perfection. Yet it is not improper to use the term Eden, or any other Scripture term for the state implied by it, to describe the state of hearts and lives to-day that have attained to it, because all Scripture is applicable to all ages and to all hearts.

This tree of life—the Lord with his matchless love—grows in the midst of the street of the New Jerusalem. The street, or to use a more common phrase, the way or path of life, is the truth by means of which we walk. When our Lord says, “I will show thee the path of life,” He means that He will point out to us the heavenly truths which shall constitute our daily walk, or show us how to live. The street of the New Jerusalem may just as well be translated its path. The tree of life is said, therefore, to grow in the midst of its street, because the Lord as love (or the love of the Lord) is the central principle of life to whomsoever comes to dwell in the New Jerusalem. All his life-walk turns to it; all his desires and affections look to it. It is never out of his sight. It is before him whithersoever his steps tend, and in the very midst of his path.

The tree of life was in the midst of the river also. This is a curious expression from a natural point of view, but a beautiful one spiritually considered; for it indicates that the Lord as love, is not only the central principle in the mind, and consequently in the path of life, of all the dwellers in the New Jerusalem, but that He is the central point (in the midst or center) of all their spiritual wisdom. The river of water of life, is the wisdom of life made manifest to the mind as it flows into the understanding from the Lord; and God and the Lamb—the invisible Divinity and the Divine Humanity—are the center of it. It all comes from the Lord—the glorified Christ; it all looks to Him; it regards Him in every turning of the thought. All principles, all truths, are flowings forth from Him, and bear his image and superscription. The mind which, in all its meditations, never loses sight of the Lord as its central light and warmth, is the one in the midst of whose river of water of life, as it proceeds from the throne of God, the tree of life forever stands.

And it is “on this side and on that.” It is to the right and the left; in heavenly considerations and earthly; in states of light and in those of obscurity; at church and at work. Under all circumstances the tree of life is before the eyes, forming a part of every thought, entering into every motive, guiding in every act. “Guiding,”

we say, "in every act," because it bare twelve manner of fruits. Twelve is a symbol employed when it is intended that the expression shall be all-embracing. Twelve manner of fruits is every kind of fruit which the tree of life is capable of producing. The fruits are good works. He in whose heart the tree of life is planted, bearing its twelve manner of fruits, is he who in all his works bears heavenly fruit, and all whose deeds are good. It is he, the entire works of whose life are the fruits of love—of that love whose center and source is the Lord; of love which is all-embracing in its character; of love which is holy, pure, unselfish, overflowing with benevolence to all mankind.

Such a tree when planted in the heart, "yields its fruit every month;" because the Lord's love, when it is the soul's animating principle, produces works that are genuinely good in every changing state. "And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations." Leaves signify the thoughts or rational intuitions of man; and the leaves of the tree of life, or the thoughts of those in whom the love of the Lord is the ruling principle, are all good and for the good of all mankind—for the healing of the spiritual diseases of themselves and all the world.

And how beautifully comes in the declaration, "Blessed are they that do his commandments,

that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." Is it not wonderful how many different ways have been held as essential to the obtaining of salvation? Yet we have it here in its perfection. Who obtain it? They who *do* the Lord's commandments. Simple, brief, and clear! Yet it has been said that no one can keep the commandments; and that, therefore, faith alone is the way to salvation. But the tree of life is the Lord our love. That is what we need; that is what we must receive. That is innocence, purity, bliss—the sum of all faith, hope and charity. That is salvation and eternal life. That is Eden, Beulah, Zion, the kingdom of heaven, the New Jerusalem. And the way to it is, *doing the Lord's commandments.*

This is only a repetition of the Lord's words, "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." Paul had grasped the truth when he said, "Love is the fulfilling of the law." Eden was lost by breaking the commandments; it will be regained by keeping them. The cherubim guard the tree of life from the hands of the profane. The flame of the sword, or the self-love of man himself, protects it from the touch of sensualism by rendering it unappreciated and unknown. But it is gained again, and our right to it is re-established, by the persistent effort to

obey the Lord's commands, or to live the life that He has taught us in his Word.

Is it true that we cannot keep the commandments? We cannot, indeed, keep them of ourselves, or in our own strength. But it is ours to make the effort, and it is the Lord's to furnish the power. If we make the effort in earnest, the power is always sure to be supplied. If we lift no hand, make no exertion, raise no prayer, no strength comes. The Lord flows always into active, never into passive agencies. Man is like the flowers. As they hold up their modest cups to receive the refreshing dew and the light of the morning sun, so must he look up, open his heart to the sweet influence of heaven, will to do the right *as* of himself, and then the Lord flows in with invigorating power. We can keep the commandments; yet not in our own strength, for we have none. But we can if we seek the Lord's strength; for He is the fullness of strength, and is ever ready and waiting to give us all we ask or really need.

Briefly to sum up what has been said in these discourses about the Garden of Eden, as viewed in its true spirit and interpreted by the science of correspondences:

When the Lord created man at the first, He raised him up into a condition of love, purity, innocence, spiritual intelligence and happiness.

This state of life is called in his holy Word, the Garden of Eden. He placed in the midst of this garden—in the inmost of man's soul—the tree of life, which was Himself as the only love and life of man. To eat of this tree was to live in love to Him derived from Him. But he also endowed man with the gift of freedom; because, not to be free was not to be man. In his freedom, and thus of his own motion, man, after a long period of happiness, turned from the Lord and his love, and began to live for self and from the love of self. This was eating of a tree, or living from a principle, of which the Lord had bidden him not to eat. It was the sensual principle, under the symbol of the serpent, which seduced him. Then man lost his blissful Eden, because he had departed from the Eden state; and losing that, he lost the spiritual wisdom which belonged to it, and finally all knowledge that it ever was, and even the conception that it could be. So the race for long centuries groped in darkness, all oblivious of things spiritual and divine.

True, the lamp was lighted and kept blazing in the inspired Word. But men's eyes were closed to its heavenly effulgence. The Word was a light shining upon closed and darkened minds that did not comprehend its meaning. "The light shone in darkness, but the darkness comprehended it not." Our Lord came upon earth to show man

the way back, and encourage and assist him to return to his lost Eden. He was received by a few, yet his teachings were but partially comprehended and dimly discerned. He has waited with mercy and long suffering for man—waited for him to develop into a state wherein he could receive the divine words in their true spiritual meaning. Then He raised up a messenger, Emanuel Swedenborg, whom He illumined with his wisdom, to reveal the mystery of Eden, of the kingdom of heaven, of the New Jerusalem; to unfold in greater fullness the true nature of that wondrous spiritual life set forth in the divine Word for the restoration of man, and to make plain the true spirit of all He had hitherto taught.

So we find the New Jerusalem of divine promise, to be but paradise restored. The rivers of Eden break out afresh in its golden streets; the tree of life is growing by its river of living water; all the blessings that man ever enjoyed, shall be his again; all love, innocence, purity, wisdom and happiness, the river pure as crystal that flows from the throne of God, the tree of life with its healing leaves and heavenly fruit, will he but keep the Lord's commandments.

The invitation is full and free. "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." The water of life is the truth of God's holy Word;—of the Word as apprehended, not in the obscurity

of the letter, but in the clear-shining of the spirit. If it were truth only, mere knowledge and doctrine, it were not much. But there, in the midst of it, is the life itself. There is the Tree of Life, the Lord our love; there are its fruits of every hue; there are its leaves for the whole world's healing. And they are all parts of a heavenly whole. They are all divine. We can spare no portion of them. Doctrine is for our teaching; but we are taught it that we may live it. Truth is for our enlightenment; but it becomes our condemnation if we fail to walk in the light of it. It is only by living or doing as the truth requires, that our hearts are opened to the reception of the fruit of that immortal tree which is forever in the midst of the paradise of God.

Well, here is a condition of life we all ardently desire. The New Jerusalem is a state of spiritual life and wisdom. It is Eden restored. Its joys are for both worlds, the present and the world beyond. Its universal attainment will banish wrong, disorder, unrest, sorrow and sighing, from the earth. Its attainment by each heart, will banish them from thence. And when we ask, Lord, who shall have it? the answer comes echoing through the corridors of the soul, "Whosoever will!"

If there is a blessing that is worth gaining, it is this; if a life that is worth living, it is this; if a peace worth striving for, it is this. Shall we

not take the lesson to our hearts, and make it the theme of deep and solemn reflection, and of sincere and earnest prayer? Shall we be thoughtless of that which is of so much higher import than any mere worldly things? or indifferent to that which the Lord regards as worthy our supreme effort? Let us reflect. Let us do more,—lift up our hearts to the throne of grace, and pray that we may be more earnest, more humble, more devoted—more believing, loving and obedient.





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